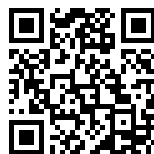

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ARTES SCIENTIA VERITAS

Hubert Bell

BOOKS BY HEYWOOD BROWN

THE A. E. F.

SEEING THINGS AT NIGHT

PIECES OF HATE

THE BOY GREW OLDER

THE SUN FIELD

SITTING ON THE WORLD

SITTING ON THE WORLD

BY

HEYWOOD BROUN

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY GREW OLDER," ETC.

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To
VIRGINIA TRACY

Most of the pieces in this book appeared in *The World*. Others were printed in *The Cosmopolitan*, *The American*, *Collier's Weekly* and *The Forum*. The editors said that I might use the articles again.

PREFACE

Sometimes the author of this book is referred to as "I" and again he appears as "we." There is no significance nor symbolism in this. He hopes that the inconsistency will be pardoned in a presidential year.

JULY 16, 1924.

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SITTING ON THE WORLD

I

Sitting on the World

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF HUMPTY-DUMPTY

FRANKLY, we have never been entirely clear as to what it was which made Rome fall. We have heard feminism blamed and liquor and the Continental Sabbath. Others have mentioned easy divorce and machine politics. We even have a vague memory that one of the historians took particular pains to point out that the decay began a little after the Romans abandoned whole-wheat bread. However, there seems to be a pretty general agreement that Rome did fall, and numberless public orators have behaved as if it were a personal calamity.

We have not wept for Rome, nor has the example served to frighten us much. So far as we can remember, no mad impulse of ours has ever been thwarted

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by the sudden recollection, "That's just the sort of business that was responsible for the fall of Rome." We are reconciled to the fact that nations do fall. All of them. Nothing can be done about it.

"Strangers will enter the land if we do not have better ideals, if we do not seek to live on a higher plane," said Archbishop Hayes last Sunday in the Tribune. "They will take it from us. We shall be wiped out."

Yes, and if we do adopt every one of the principles which Archbishop Hayes regards as "higher ideals" it seems to us entirely probable that in time the same annihilation will occur. There is always the possibility of the discovery of still higher ideals.

But why, we wonder, do orators never dwell on the fact that Sparta also fell? And after that fall there was not even enough left to justify an issue of picture postcards. The battle in the pass, the boy who waited patiently for the fox to see the evil of his ways, and "Come back with your shield or on it," comprise practically all that is left in memory of Sparta.

The austere do decline and die. Now that it is all over, it seems that Rome chose the better way. At least, that empire was a good fellow while it had

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it. Time has elevated its importance far beyond all the strangers who overthrew it. Rome was ready to fall. It had made its peace with posterity. "After me," the falling Roman might well say, "the scholars and the tourists."

To be sure, all the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Rome together again. It was like that with Humpty-Dumpty, but he has remained one of the most inspiring tragic figures of all time. No doubt he could have gone on quite a little longer if he had been content merely to pace up and down the narrow pathway on the top of his high wall. There were those in authority who told him it was an ideal, but he knew it for a wall. He wanted more of life, and he reached out toward the horizon and slipped and fell.

In the first second he travelled sixteen feet, and that wild swoop with green grass rushing up to meet him and wind pounding in his ears may very well have been worth an eternity of life on the wall. As he fell he brushed against a tree-top and the leaves which pounded upon his back seemed to say, "'Ataboy, Humpty-Dumpty!'" There was such a singing in his ears that he hardly felt the blow which came before the silence and the darkness.

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"Nature of death—accidental; cause—multiple contusions," wrote the court physician, who came with all convenient haste.

"Can't anything be done about it?" asked the King, who arrived a little later. "Glands, or something like that?"

"We might," said the court physician. "But say, listen, Your Majesty," and he beckoned the King to come closer so that not even the Generals could hear.

"What is it?" whispered the King, after assuring the Prime Minister that it actually was a private matter.

"I could fix him up," murmured the court physician.

"Fine and dandy," said the King.

"Shush! Your Majesty," hissed the doctor, placing a restraining hand upon the arm of his sovereign. "Bodily, the problem is simple. The Garfunkle Intraligamentary Glue operation would fix him right as a—right as a trivet."

"Paste him together, you mean?"

"Well, that's near enough for a layman. From just looking at him you could never tell the difference. That's the physical side of it. But the mind. There's something else. He's had a great

THE FALL OF HUMPTY-DUMPTY

shock. I could put him together again, but I give it as my professional opinion that he'd never be quite normal. I mean, I doubt very much whether you could ever get him to go up on the wall again."

The King gave a low whistle.

"Exactly," said the court physician. "It wouldn't look well, would it? After all, we have the state to consider. How would you like your subjects to know that living on top of a high ideal is mighty uncomfortable business? We'd have to draft him and he'd fall off again at the first opportunity. Still, it isn't for me to decide. That's up to you."

"Miss Jimpson," roared the King, and his secretary ran forward.

"Take a statement for the Associated Press. Ready? 'Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall. All the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Humpty together again.'"

THE INCOMPLETE ANGLER

THERE are fish in that lake six miles north of Stamford. At least there was one in it last Sunday. I don't own the lake, but I am related to it by marriage, and so I was enormously thrilled to find a fish in which I could take a really personal interest.

He was not of my catching. It was a couple of poachers who drew him in. I saw them first from the shore of my own acre across the lake, and at that distance they looked like burly ruffians. It seemed silly to shout "Don't fish in this lake" across the wide stretch of water and so I went around the trail through the deepest part of the jungle and came up with them.

Close to they weren't burly ruffians at all, but only small boys. They gave me no chance to speak severely, for one of them began, "Do you own this lake?"

I shook my head. "It belongs to Ruth Hale, my wife," I told them.

THE INCOMPLETE ANGLER

"Do you think she'd let us fish in here?" the other wanted to know.

At this point I might well have given the two boys a talk on marriage. If I had made such a speech I would have pointed out that five-sixths of all the trouble in the world arises from the attempt of people to speak for others whom they do not represent. A man and a woman do not become one after marriage, I was minded to tell them. It is entirely possible for a man to be married years and years and yet have not the slightest idea of what attitude she will take about people catching fish in her lake.

I think it is much better that way. People who live together ought to make a point of leaving some of their notions unexpressed, so that they will have the wherewithal with which to surprise each other on rainy days. If they can't do it any other way, it's a good plan for both parties to change their opinions around every once and so often.

Some people profess to feel that love means understanding some other person finally and completely. That sounds to me like pretty dull business. In such a state how can two people converse? Each knows beforehand just what the other is going to

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say. I never could see much sense in Nora's outburst against Torvald (if that is the name of the husband in the play) because she suddenly came to feel that she had been living with a strange man. That seems to me to be far and away his best point.

Well, of course, there might be some ground for complaint if the man or the woman was too strange. The fun comes in guessing what the other person is going to feel, or do, or say, and being right about it part of the time. You and I are misunderstood by the world in general anywhere from 70 to 80 per cent of the time, and that's too large a margin of error. We want to know some one who senses practically three-fifths of our souls.

It would be embarrassing and disturbing to encounter an individual who comprehended you to a complete 100 per cent. A man ought to have some privacy of emotion. Indeed, he is best off when there remains some tiny corner in his kingdom where even his own conscious self has never set foot, or at least has passed through at twilight.

But I didn't say all this to the two boys who were fishing in the lake. I supposed that they wanted something more definite.

"I don't know whether she'll let you fish in the

THE INCOMPLETE ANGLER

lake or not," I told them. "You'll have to ask her."

At the moment, it seemed to me that the issue was a little academic. Ruth Hale does go in for the principle of the thing a good deal, but I did presume to hazard the guess, just to myself, that she couldn't get very mad at people just for trying to catch fish in the lake. I once fished all afternoon from the balcony of a hotel in Venice and nobody objected at all, because there were no fish in that canal.

But suddenly I observed that this Stamford crisis was more acute. The two boys actually had caught a fish out of this lake in which I was emotionally interested. He was a very big fish, weighing, I should say, from two to twenty pounds. They told me he was a pickerel.

That complicated the issue still more, because I understand that the pickerel is a Ku Klannish fish who will not tolerate anything in the same lake with him except 100 per cent pickerel. I have discussed this problem with the owner of the lake, who seems to plan a sort of melting pot. When something tugs at her line she wants to be surprised when she yanks it out. My suggestion was to import sharks to eat the pickerel, but it was rejected as not feasible.

SITTING ON THE WORLD

So, you see, the person who catches a pickerel in the lake may be doing a favor not only to the owner but to a long line of bass and perch as yet unborn.

Except in the matter of eating, I have no great preference in fish. Smelts are very good to eat, and I have never met them under any other circumstances. Whether or not the smelt in his private life fights doggedly and gives the fisherman a terrific struggle I don't know.

As a matter of fact, the demand for contentious fish is a little beyond me. I consulted Al Frueh about pickerel and he spoke contemptuously of them. He said that a pickerel just slumped after he was hooked and waited patiently to be pulled out of the water. That seems to me a very accommodating sort of behavior. It's all anybody should ask of a fish.

The pickerel provides man with food and thereby does his bit. (Perhaps he makes some bones about it, but let that pass.) Should a fish, I want to know, be expected not only to feed man's body but also to nourish his ego by somersaulting around, upsetting the boat with his tail, swallowing the hook and running the whole gamut of emotions so that the fisherman shall have the illusion of conquest?

THE INCOMPLETE ANGLER

I imagine that every inveterate fisherman is among the great and plagued army hard-ridden by the feeling of inferiority. Lacking the nerve to cope on equal terms with office boy, wife or head waiter, your habitual fisherman restores his self-respect every Sunday by bullying trout and having the last word with a flounder. The world knows that Walton was gentle and soft-spoken.

If I were a pickerel I would so arrange my final exit that it should constitute a moral victory. Looking up through the water I would say, or seem to say, with an obvious sneer, "Inferiority complex! Inferiority complex!" And then as the insult bubbled to the surface I would just lie back in the water, so much dead weight, and hiss, "I'm a fish, damn you, not an emotional actor. Go ahead and yank. Who's stopping you?"

And so, although I have nothing to say about it, I think it would be wrong to exterminate the pickerel in the lake because he remains honest and class conscious to the end. Still, probably no great harm is done by catching one of them once in a while. It may serve to encourage the others and give them a purpose in life.

JOE GRIM

JOE GRIM, a small catfish or bullhead, was hooked in the lake north of Stamford at 3:30 o'clock Saturday afternoon. He would have been thrown back at once because of his meagreness, but H. 3d, who had assisted in the capture a little, protested. This was his first fish and he wanted to take it home.

The hook remained in the mouth of Joe Grim, and for a time he swung suspended by a loop of line over a nail in the wall of a local cabin. He was then wrapped in tissue paper and placed in a heavy burlap bag on the back seat of a small sedan. The journey to town consumed two hours and a half, and the springs of the car are not so good.

H. 3d also insists that I sat on Joe Grim during the greater part of the journey, but I don't think so. I am pretty sure it was the chocolate cake.

At half past 6 Joe was taken out of the burlap bag in the kitchen of the town house, and to the

JOE GRIM

surprise and consternation of all beholders it was observed that he still breathed. Immediately the hook was removed from his mouth and he was placed in a laundry tub. Once in water, Joe Grim not only revived but swam about furiously, and within half an hour ate a hearty meal of shredded wheat, which was supplied to him at my suggestion as there were no worms available in the house at the moment.

Joe Grim is still alive and, as far as I can tell, happy. His career has been an inspiration to me. When water was denied to him during the long ordeal in the automobile, he breathed and lived on will power. His gills clamped tight as iron doors each time that the spirit within him pounded to be let out of torrid torture into the empty glare of nothingness. Perhaps he had been told of cool, green, muddy pools which are eternal. But Joe gasped and choked to hang on to the now which he knew. And after watching this little catfish I feel that anybody is a damn fool to die.

I plan to put Grim into a pail of water and take him back to the lake north of Stamford. Of course, he doesn't actually have to have water. He could sit up on the driver's seat or even wriggle along

SITTING ON THE WORLD

behind this car, which has a good deal of carbon in the engine. Still, I think a pail of water would be a courtesy.

When Joe Grim gets back to his lake, what tales he will have to tell! After the first month or so I rather fear that he may grow a little tiresome. Because he suffered so much he will inevitably have to garnish his adventure with significance. There will be a moral, a purpose, a philosophy. Perhaps Joe will tell the other bullheads that he fought in a war to end war.

And naturally he will organize. By and by belatedly, he will run for something and be opposed by bullheads who have never ridden in sedans or lived in laundry tubs. This will bring in the religious issues, and Joe will be badly defeated.

However, in his community there need be no protracted period of waiting for the coming of a younger generation, and every new fish born into the lake alive will be compelled to hear at least once the tale of the covered wagon and the trek across the continent. And these little catfish will be allowed to swim close and gaze at the scar across the mouth of old Joe Grim, who fought and bled back in the days when bullheads were bullheads.

JOE GRIM

Joe has rather dampened my enthusiasm for fishing. Certainly I shall never venture to eat any catfish caught in the lake north of Stamford. If the filet so much as bobbled under the knife I would draw back from the table with the horrible conviction that here again was Joe Grim and that he had somehow survived the frying pan and the bread crumbs.

But even beyond that I am disturbed by the evidence that fish so much want to live on. There is no such passion in my angling. It is not fair that I should thwart and crush great eagerness for existence for the sake of the extremely mild diversion which I get from fishing. They told me that the fish cared very little and that they were cold blooded and felt no pain. But they were not fish who told me.

Fishing is something less than the duel pictured by the complete angler. The match making decidedly is open to criticism.

"But sometimes the fish gets away," explains the angler.

That is not enough. A good draw or, at the very best, a moral victory is the most a fish can expect. The rules should be altered. If there is to be adequate chivalry in the pastime no man should be allowed

SITTING ON THE WORLD

a rod and line until he has first signed an agreement that every time he fails to pull a hooked fish out of water he himself will accept and signalize defeat by jumping into the lake. The man gets the fish or the fish gets the man. I can see no other fair way.

And even after my amendment has been adopted there must be a congress to consider justice to the worm. He is exploited by both fish and fishermen. For him there is not so much as the cold comfort of a moral victory. He stakes his life upon a roulette wheel which carries just two numbers. One is zero and the other is double zero. The worm may be taken with the hook or without the hook. You can't expect a worm to get excited about a sport with such limited potentialities as far as he is concerned.

And my experience is that he doesn't get excited. I have seen many a worm carry his complete boredom right into the jaws of an onrushing fish. He will neither fight nor fly. He tries to dignify his death by being sullen about it.

"But," I can imagine a fish saying in rebuttal, "your remarks are most unfair. Worming is a truly sporting proposition. Sometimes you don't get the whole worm."

THE FROG HE WOULDN'T

BULLFROGS are a queer lot. All night long they argue, and not one of them ever convinces another. These dull-witted little amphibians don't go about it in the right way. Each seizes upon a dogma and is content ceaselessly to bellow out his slogan without regard to what is said round about him.

But there is one in the Hale Lake north of Stamford who has much local reputation as an orator. When first I heard him, Gilbert Gabriel, an old woodsman, declared that a cow had strayed into the thicket beside the shore. To me it seemed as if the sound came from the very centre of the lake, and when we pressed forward this proved to be the case.

Gabriel, the veteran scout, was discomfited, you may be sure, but he said that in all his experience he had never encountered such resonance in any frog.

This czar of all the sedges is more taciturn than

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the other frogs. He lets each speak his piece half a dozen times, and then he roars his own opinion and opposition gurgles and drowns in the tumult.

Before the summer is done I hope to learn the meaning of his words. There should be no great difficulty, for his sentiment is terse and never varied. I think the thing he cries out is "Deep damnation." Under the moon he shouts it, and again when rain roughens the black waters.

On Monday a carnival sky spread the silver of temptation right up the edge of the birch tree shadows. And on that night elation seemed to come into some of the frog voices.

"Lead your own life," said a little one under a water lily. "Gather ye rosebuds," cried the one who lives beside the sunken boat. "Man is a god," screamed the frog by the great rock.

And then through the aperture of a second's stillness the big bullfrog boomed out "Deep damnation," and the threat roared back across the lake in echo.

"Lead your own life," the little one said again, but something of confidence was gone now and the talk of rosebuds and of godhead grew pale and academic.

THE FROG HE WOULDN'T

The moon itself could make no promise mighty enough to stand against the warning of old stalwart.

Frogs who would have adventured lost their eagerness as they felt a certain numbness bite at their webbed feet. And the chill was not in the air.

"Lead your own life," came again for the hundredth time, but the frog who said it cowered all the while under his water lily and was afraid of

• "Deep damnation."

IN WHICH OUR HERO RENOUNCES THE STAGE

I AM conscious of many faults, but it came as a shock to me to learn that I had dignity. And, worst of all, this dignity was described to me as something feeble in its own right which could be maintained only by ceaseless care and chivalry. It seemed to lie somewhat outside my natural boundaries, a sort of Philippine obligation and encumbrance in my empire. Dignity constituted my sole exotic possession, and it was enough to keep me from going on the stage.

To be sure, I didn't think I'd be good on the stage, but there was a manager who offered me a chance to play in a revue. The plan, as I understood it, did not provide that I should sing or dance. This curtailed the romantic possibilities of the role, and yet I could have blacked my eyebrows and put on grease paint and walked right past the stage doorman without asking to see somebody. And as I remember it,

OUR HERO RENOUNCES THE STAGE

the contract specified that I could not be discharged for two weeks. This would have enabled me for the rest of my life to begin stories with, "When I was on the stage"——

The passion to be a player has never quite been among my most turbulent longings. When the senior class of Horace Mann High School went to see "Fantana," I remember being rather envious of the leading man who sang the rickshaw song with Julia Sanderson. But no definite plan of action formed in my mind. I was willing to accept the situation as inevitably tragic. And by the way, in justice to Miss Sanderson, while it is true that I was a senior in high school, it should also be set down that she had come to "Fantana" straight through the gate of a convent school for adolescents.

In college I tried to get a part in the play which the university dramatic association presented. There were trials, and I recited Cæsar's speech to the Sphinx and was immediately asked to be one of the Cossack soldiers who marched across the stage in the third act. I refused, but in two years' time I had made no definite progress, for when I was cast for a role in the annual Delta Upsilon play it was again as a member of the mob. This time I accepted the

SITTING ON THE WORLD

offer. Time had flown. My first youth was gone and I felt that I was no longer in a position to be choosy. And this was a little better than being a marching Cossack. We of the mob were on the stage for an entire act and, although we had no lines, noises were intrusted to us.

At the end of the third act it was our function to simulate anger. The production was less perfect than one might see in the Moscow Art Theatre, and the director was never explicit about the precise manner in which we should express anger. The period was Elizabethan, and few of us were expert in the blasphemies and obscenities of that day. During rehearsals a little growling was about all we ever achieved, and it wasn't very good growling because it was never possible to get all the members of the mob to report for rehearsal at the same time.

There was no leader of the mob. We were all equal in obscurity, but on the first night I believe that I managed, by dramatic inspiration, to secure an ascendancy. I set the tone of the mob. When it came time for us to express anger I was too filled with emotion to be confined by mere inarticulate growling. I raised my voice above the others in the mob. They had the souls of supers, and growled

OUR HERO RENOUNCES THE STAGE

as they had been taught to do. Nothing short of a complete characterization would do for me. I was a very special sort of angry Elizabethan, and so I shouted at the top of my voice, "To Hell with Yale!" The rest took it up and we continued to make the counterfeited streets of London ring to this fine old Anglo-Saxon slogan until the curtain shut us off from a tumultuous audience.

I have never played again. Indeed I had reconciled myself to the notion that my dramatic career lay wholly behind me, and then came this recent offer to do a fifteen-minute monologue in a revue to be produced on the Century Roof this summer. The pity of it was that recognition had come so late. By now the voice is noticeably foggy in the upper register. "I want to love 'neath a calcium moon"—that was what the tenor had sung years ago when I went to the theatre with the senior class of Horace Mann High School and burned with envy. The current offer did not attempt to contract for my emotions or offer any moonlight. It was merely to be a monologue on passing events, with no soft shoe dancing or imitations of Ethel Barrymore.

Even so, a number of people who control my destiny were unalterably opposed to the experiment.

SITTING ON THE WORLD

They said that I would be terrible. On that point I was not disposed to argue. It seemed to be irrelevant. My ambition was to go on the stage—not to succeed there. According to my observation, bad actors always get a lot more fun out of it than good ones. I'm sure Louis Mann would not trade places with John Barrymore under any consideration whatsoever.

One of my faults is lack of will power, and I lost the argument about going on the stage. My amateur standing is safe. I will not ever see the other side of the moon or know what a critic looks like when you watch him from across the footlights.

IN WHICH HE REHEARSES

I'VE lost my amateur standing. It was one of the proud moments of my life. Our show, "Round the Town," had its dress rehearsal in Newark Sunday night. In the beginning the omens seemed to be set against me. A heavy rain drenched the alley. The theatre appeared to be locked front and back, but I rattled the knob of the stage door and at last a man flung it open and growled, "Quit making all that noise. Don't you know we're having a rehearsal here?"

That was the cue for my proud moment. I drew myself up to my full width and answered, "I'm one of the actors." And he let me in.

Nobody can possibly have any adequate conception of what occurred during the creation week described in Genesis unless he has seen a musical revue in the making. Of course, I have no inten-

SITTING ON THE WORLD

tion of comparing the two productions. Ours took more time, four weeks against one, but I doubt very much whether it will have anything like so long a run.

Still, from watching the rehearsal of a revue one gets some idea of what the word chaos means. The nature of man is stripped bare. Intellect is banished as emotion clashes with emotion and passion bumps against passion. In my unsophistication I foresaw a hundred bloody brawls. During a rehearsal, it seems, it is customary for the actor every little while to toss away his part and then catch it again on the first bound. Even a Republican Cabinet could hardly offer the spectacle of so many resignations flung out in fury.

After a bit I got the hang of it. I found that when one of my fellow actors said, "All right, I'll quit," he merely meant to say no more than a simple "Is that so!" And when one of the many producers replied, also according to the formula, "If you don't like it we'll get somebody else," nothing more was intended than a soothing "Don't get excited."

But I didn't feel quite confident enough of this to get into the game and offer any resignations on my own account. Instead, I remained most respect-

IN WHICH HE REHEARSES

ful to all the producers. Here I think Genesis was more shrewdly administered. Cross purposes were reduced to a minimum through single control. The government of a musical show during rehearsal seems to be modeled on the old moot court or, in our own day, the New England town meeting. Nor is it numbers so much which prevails as vocal vigor. The one who shouts the loudest carries the point. Some day an essay should be written on "The Effect of Chest Tones Upon the Æsthetic Development of American Dramatic Art."

I think I understand now from what quarters musical comedies draw their audiences during the first three or four weeks after an opening. These people who fill the orchestra are the producers, the directors, the composers, the scene designers, the dance manipulators. They like to return to revisit the battlefields.

Although I did not understand much that was going on, I did not behave exactly like a dumb fool. The order had been that I was to be ready at 11 o'clock. Getting ready in this case didn't require anything more than taking off my hat and clearing my throat. And I was ready; but nothing happened. There seemed to be some difficulty about

SITTING ON THE WORLD

the lights. That I believe is also part of the tradition. "Let there be light," was enough in Genesis, but it isn't as simple as that in creating a revue. Apparently there are all kinds of lights in a theatre except the particular sort which the director wants at any given moment. The mind of the director is always a little quicker than the hand of the electrician at the switchboard. When it is necessary for the sun to go down like thunder all the preliminary efforts result in nothing more than a long Nordic twilight.

Then there is the question of artistic effect. I listened to a long and really fundamental argument between two directors who stood as symbols of opposing schools of art. One said of the combination of foots and spots (or whatever they were), "It's very pretty." To which the other replied, "But you can't see anything."

I was afraid they might never come through this divergence, as it is a vexed problem which has agitated warring aesthetes ever since the first cave man chalked pictures on a wall. While the debate raged I went out into the rain and brought back ham sandwiches and distributed them around to chorus girls who were not at that precise moment engaged

IN WHICH HE REHEARSES

in rehearsal. That was where I was smart. When they called for my act I received a vigorous round of applause at the start. I only wish I could supply ham sandwiches for the entire audience on the opening night.

The chief director said that the turn was a little short. "It ran nine minutes and forty-five seconds," he told me.

That objection I was able to meet with a highly professional reply. "When there's an audience," I replied, "I think, with the laughs, it will run to almost ten minutes."

Unless somebody laughs it's going to be mighty lonely business out on that great bare stage. They've got lights for me too. There's one that they flash in my eyes to blind me. I believe it's a baby spot. And so I stagger around sightless as Samson. I hope somebody in the audience coughs so that I will know I am not wholly cut off from all human communication.

As a matter of fact, I'm not very far on the stage yet. Three feet is the extent of my invasion. That gives me an opportunity to lean against the proscenium arch, and I can practically fall off when the moment comes.

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If I ever live through this I'm going to be a mighty lenient critic from now on.

Along about 4 in the morning we all gathered on the stage for coffee, and I found that in spite of the tumult there was plenty of school spirit in our company. One of the chorus girls told me that she had been in the show business for ten years and this was the most trying rehearsal she'd ever been through, and I said it was just the same with me. And I remembered that David Garrick had been an actor, and Shakespeare and Moliere, and this seemed just the place a person ought to be at 4 o'clock in the morning, even if it was only Newark. And I realized that I too belonged among the troupers and I knew that the life had got me.

IN WHICH THE STAGE RENOUNCES OUR HERO

IN reviewing Heywood Broun, who made his stage debut in "Round the Town" in Newark on Monday night, I would like very much to say that he was adequate. But that would be gross favoritism and critical dishonesty. "Pretty terrible" is a little closer to the phrase which comes to mind. I may say for him that he didn't fall off the stage, but that is about as far as I can go.

The explanation is more difficult. It would be easy to blame the size of the theatre or the remoteness of Newark, but Newark isn't really very far away and the people down front didn't seem to be any more disposed to hilarity than those in the right field bleachers.

Nor was stage fright more than a passing factor in the debacle. Mr. Broun quite evidently began

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in mortal terror and got completely stuck at one point in a speech, which, to my certain knowledge, he has done fifty times. After he got out of that he was entirely self-possessed, but as he grew chilly calm so did the audience. I did admire his courage. It is a fearful thing to face a large audience in which every member is quite pointedly not laughing. The unison of disaffection tramps on the human soul like a marching army. Broun pressed forward as though he were the last survivor in Pickett's charge. For that I liked him. And so I am disposed to be charitable and say to him, "Don't fret. You had a shot at it."

I am curious to know just why he was so frightened when he first went on, because we had a long confab about that and he spoke quite frankly.

"You see, it's like this," he explained. "If I go into this show and I'm a terrible bust, what of it? I can write a piece for the paper on 'Being a Flop in the Theatre' and that will fill a column for one day. On the other hand, if I'm pretty good, that won't do any harm, and if I'm just dandy that will all score for my ego and it may help me to build a house on that acre north of Stamford."

My impression is that he expected to fall some-

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where between terrible and excellent and so he was not gambling for any terrific stakes. And so I don't know why he was afraid. But I think I have an inkling. Man in his heart of hearts cannot stand the notion of failing at anything. There is a sneaking suspicion around the roots of the mind in every individual that if he had really gone in for rigorous training that he might have had a chance with Dempsey; that only laziness has kept him out of literature; that perhaps there lies in his fingers unrealized genius for painting, surgery or sculpture. As long as he puts none of these things to the test he is perfectly content with his dreams—vague as they may be. Even though the particular activity may be something which he has never remotely thought of attempting, he will suffer in defeat if unanticipated circumstances force a showdown.

The world has never known versatility more brilliant than that of Leonardo, and yet he would have turned sour and discontented if by any turn of fate he had found it necessary to play end man in a minstrel show and had acquitted himself poorly in the performance.

The most common of all delusions is the widespread belief of everybody that he has latent talent

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for the theatre. George Kelly, author of "The Show-Off," once wrote a brilliant short play about a man who talked away the opposition of a whole family, which simply could not bide the thought of taking him as a son-in-law. And the scapegoat did it by cornering each opponent in turn and remarking ingratiatingly, "You know you should have gone on the stage."

A certain duality of personality oppressed Broun, I believe. There is something in the job of criticism which wars against creation, whether the critic tries to make his escape through fiction, poetry, toe-dancing, or public speaking. It was evident to me that one integer in Broun was sitting across the foot-lights with the audience and surveying the performance with a jaundiced eye. "You're rotten," this rebel kept whispering. Secession in the soul is difficult to combat. An ego divided against itself is pretty apt to crumble.

And yet what toughness and resiliency there is in us mortals! Immediately after the show I nudged Broun and said, "Well, I guess that will be about all the stage work you'll attempt after that terrible exhibition, isn't it?"

"What do you mean 'terrible'?" he answered in

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what seemed wholly unfeigned surprise. "It was the acoustics," he explained. "And besides, I'm not quite easy in it yet and I don't know where the laughs come. Perhaps it needs a little cutting here and there and a little sharpening up. Of course, the fellow that kept swatting me with the spotlight bothered me a good deal and I hadn't had quite enough sleep. Missing my dinner didn't help much either."

"But," I told him, "you can get by as a newspaper man. Why fool around with this business that you're not fitted for?"

"Not fitted for!" he snapped at me. "Who says I'm not? There were two chorus girls at the dress rehearsal—the one I gave the ham sandwich to and the other that borrowed the apple pie—and they said they thought my routine was swell. They said I ought to have gone on the stage years ago."

"Hell's bells!" I exclaimed in horror, "you don't mean to tell me that you're going to go on with this?"

"If you don't think so, come to the matinee and the evening performance to-day and just see if I'm going on," he roared at me.

And then he clenched his fist and shouted "To

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Seville or back to the frog pond.” I don’t know what that means, but I assume that it is the tag line of some anecdote indicating chuckle-headedness or grim determination.

MEMORIES OF AN OLD PLAYER

“As an actor,” said the Times Square Daily, “he was very wet.” And this seemed to be the prevailing opinion, although to the very end I was disposed to bring in a minority report. But now that my stage career has ended, I have few apologies to make. Or at any rate I shall make few. My only regret is for the disappointment of certain spectators who attended the matinee on Memorial Day.

As I looked out into the theatre on that afternoon I observed that twenty persons were present and that nine of them were small children. It was an occasion even more terrifying than the opening night. The nine small children, seemingly, had read none of the reviews and were in no wise prepared or reconciled to hearing a monologue which was not so good. When I first looked out at them they were still happy and expectant. In the space of thirty seconds my whole speech flashed before my mind.

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"And how," I thought, "will that small boy in the pink rompers enjoy the story of Mr. Sumner and the Ziegfeld chorus girl? And is there anything in the anecdote about Pola Negri calculated in any possible way to divert the black-haired child with the two pigtails?"

There was no need to haggle over an answer to myself. I knew that I stood before those nine small children empty-handed and empty-headed. Even if the anecdotes had been of the most scintillating, it would have been too little. These tiny tots had other hopes. They had not come to listen to talking. They watched me wide-eyed and waited for tricks. The situation demanded that I should stand on my head or produce two white rabbits from my sleeve. But I cannot stand on my head. Probably I couldn't get a rabbit in my sleeve or out, and anyhow there were no rabbits.

Of course, I might have fallen flat upon my face. They would have liked that. But pride in the intention and the integrity of my art was still too strong in me to permit any such compromise.

"Into each life some rain must fall," I whispered grimly to myself. "They will outgrow this fearful fifteen minutes, every one of them, and in time for-

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get." And I regarded the bright and shining faces of the kiddies very coldly.

"Empty seats cannot laugh. Empty seats never applaud," one of the veteran actors in the company had told me, and so I directed my monologue at a little frontier settlement in the second row. Two of the children were here, but between them there sat a mature woman. It seemed to me that if I could project my monologue to her the suffering of the children might possibly be tempered by a vicarious enjoyment. "Mumsey's just laughing and laughing," each little prattler would say to himself and perhaps venture a tentative giggle on his own account just through the force of parental example.

But Mumsey didn't laugh. In fact, she was an even tougher audience than Buster and Johnny. Up to the end they remained hopeful. They believed that all the talk from the man on the stage was perhaps nothing more than the traditional grown-up convention that a lot of conversation must precede all interesting and exciting events. They saw no reason why I should not suddenly shift into somersaults and save the day from total loss.

Mumsey gave up all hope after the first five minutes, and turned inimical on me. And yet that I

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could endure. After three weeks of monologuing it was not wholly a new experience. The thing which broke me up and made me bleed internally was the patient trustfulness of Buster and Johnny. Even when I came to the ultimate anecdote and started to tiptoe off so as not to drown out the applause, those two youngsters continued to look at me round-eyed and hopeful. They thought that maybe I was just going away to get the rabbits. And, as a matter of fact, the only animal I was ready to welcome and employ would have been a truculent asp to end it all.

MY BUNKIE

I LIVE in this private office of mine with two musical critics and an art critic. Of course it isn't really my office but the group has agreed, for the sake of prestige, that each shall always refer to it as "my private office."

So far there has been practically no friction. The art critic, in particular, is a delightful fellow. Art seems to be something which happens very early in the morning, for I have never seen Forbes Watson hereabouts later than 11 A. M. And so we seldom meet. But his charm remains persuasive, even during his absence, for he leaves his typewriter unlocked.

Not that I have anything against the musical critics, you understand. Deems Taylor and his assistant Alison Smith are both—well, delightful is again the word which comes to mind. Of course,

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there was that recent afternoon when Miss Smith wanted to know how some piece of music went and Deems Taylor happened to remember it. In addition to being delightful, Mr. Taylor is obliging.

I don't always enjoy his friends and for some of his friends' friends I have a distinct aversion. Everybody who comes in to talk about music always gets excited and raises his voice after a minute or so. From the scraps of visitors' conversation which rumble over my right shoulder, I gather that there are a number of things which ought to be done about music and that they are not being done. Apparently, music is something which you must bend over and stir with a stick every little while. Left to itself it would just simmer and die.

To be sure, I have met in the theatre, or rather just a little outside, a number of people with an interest or even a passion for the drama, but no one with a mission. Every one of the musical visitors has a mission. Invariably, she wants to do something for the community no matter how much it hurts.

Deems Taylor does not much encourage or draw out any of these musical missionaries, but it seems to me that he has no skill at all in getting rid of callers.

MY BUNKIE

He is always the soul of courtesy and it is a terrible thing to share an office with a man who can't help being polite. Diverting traffic is simple. I, who have no force of character whatsoever, do it without difficulty. One simple device is enough. You listen for six and a half minutes to what the visitor has to say and then remark, "I'm very much in favor of that," and stand up. And of course you keep standing. After you have stood for quite a while the visitor notices it and decides that you are going somewhere. He then summarizes his project once more and goes out, whereupon the critic sits down and becomes again a working newspaper man.

Any place you have musical critics you are pretty sure to draw young women who ought to be in opera. I really hesitate to say just how far the soprani who have passed through this office would stretch if placed end to end. Another virtue of Mr. Taylor's which we have noticed is that he is patient, very patient. As it happens, there is no piano in the office, so most of the soprani are compelled to tell about their voices instead of actually producing them. There is a great deal of genius around this year. But so far nobody has outdistanced the young woman who called the week before Christmas. She

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had sung a most astonishingly successful concert in Easton, Pa.

"Why, would you believe it, Mr. Taylor," she said, "as soon as I sang my first note that audience started to gasp and they kept on gasping all evening."

Perhaps I have exaggerated a little bit here and there in my desire to make out the blackest case possible against musical critics as roommates. The fact of the matter is that I am a little bit uneasy concerning the opinion which I have earned lately among my office fellows here. I have a guilty feeling on account of Dandy Dobbin. Dandy Dobbin is a horse and he has been here for only ten days, but it seems a great deal longer. He is operated by a pair of pedals and in addition to moving back or forward the ingenious mechanism has provided him with a latitudinal motion which is something like a trot, but rather more like the downward swoop of an express elevator. Indeed, Dobbin is a very stalwart and impressive piece of work, and stands just about a hand less than a Shetland pony.

The donor of the gift was anonymous. Two men and a boy brought the wooden horse to this office some time ago. He carries around his neck a letter

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addressed to H. 3d, and evidently the gift is intended for my son. And I have no doubt that he would like Dobbin very much, but a great gulf has been fixed between The World office and West 85th Street. It might be that Dobbin could be swung into a taxicab, but it would then be quite impossible for me to get in with him. For a time I considered the plan of running along behind, but that has been abandoned. Or I could ride Dobbin home, but I don't think I will. After the Christmas rush some small truck or other may be available. I have carefully measured the front door of my house and find that it will not be necessary to remove more than six inches on either side to get Dobbin in if only he can be transported from here to 85th Street.

But in the mean time, Dobbin strides this office like a Colossus. Neither of the musical critics likes him and I doubt if the art critic is fond of him. And I don't actually like Dobbin myself. When they first swung him up to this office I was genuinely terrified. I have read of wooden horses and it seemed entirely possible that inside the monster there might be some disgruntled and review-crazed playwright who had taken this device to get past the office boy.

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By now this fear has abated. I'm quite sure that there is no secret citadel in Dobbin. Nevertheless, I still find his eye disturbing. It is the most mocking eye I ever saw upon the countenance of any toy. In order to make room for all the other critics it has been necessary to allow Dobbin's head to rest upon the left hand side of my desk. From that easy distance he leers at me destructively. So far he has said nothing, but his thought is all too evident. When I get to pounding the typewriter hard Dobbin's head bobbles and I know that he is patronizing me.

"Yes, I suppose you could call it writing;" that's his tone. "You are putting words down on paper and they have some commonplace meaning.

"But I don't call it writing," continues Dobbin in his sneering train of thought. "I call it 'mere journalese.' It's just a job. Now, speaking of writing, I had a great uncle once called Pegasus. He knew the really first class fellows. He didn't go in for log-rollers and columnists and sophisticates. That was the real stuff. With a crowd like that a horse could really learn something. Although at that, they got most of their ideas from him."

And at this point Dobbin winks his evil eye at me.

MY BUNKIE

"Take a ride and get a notion," he seems to say, but I don't believe he means any good by me. I could pedal about on him for an hour before writing the column and after I was done it would be mere journalese just the same.

DARE DEVIL OLIVER

A MAN stopped at the city desk yesterday and left a flaring poster announcing that "Dare Devil" Oliver is coming to Paradise Park and will "thrill the crowds by his marvellous dive of 104 feet into fifty-four inches of water." Mr. Oliver will thrill twice a day. We are grateful for the news about Oliver. Although our paths have not crossed for more than a year, he has remained a vivid memory. When we saw him he was performing in the shadow of an event which loomed high above his 104-foot ladder. Indeed, his route brought him to Atlantic City only a few days before Jack Dempsey broke camp to take part in the battle of the century.

As a consequence, the first night crowd which permitted Oliver to thrill it consisted of nine people. It was bleak, gloomy weather with a stiff gale blowing in from the ocean. The leap itself was magnificent,

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but there was a facet of the performance still more striking. We found to our intense surprise that Oliver was among the authentic artists of our day.

He seemed utterly indifferent to the fact that there were but nine of us. He abated not a single foot from his ladder nor an inch from the tank of water. Every rite in the ritual was duly observed. The band played gay tunes as Oliver strolled about the foot of the ladder and looked up anxiously to the top where the wind whipped and jerked a little flag. Suddenly a large man stepped forward and hushed the clarinets. And the drums rested.

He was the announcer, and the early portion of his talk was expository. He dealt with facts—the height of the ladder and the depth of the tank. He spoke of it as “four foot of water.” Perhaps that was for oratorical effect. We are a little hurt to discover at this late date that it was actually fifty-four inches. Possibly Mr. Oliver grows older and has decided to increase his margin of safety.

In any case, there was not much passion or human appeal in the opening part of the address. The ascent from the impersonal scientific attitude to the

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human note came suddenly. The big man paused for a count of one, two, three and no one broke into the silence. Then he raised his right hand high above his head.

"And now Mr. Oliver," he said, sinking his voice to a rumbling whisper, "you may go whenever you are ready."

Again he paused and added, as if in a spontaneous burst of after-thinking, "And we all wish you the best of luck!"

On the printed page the phrase may sound like an agreeable expression of good will, but the announcer was able to allow larger implications to rush in between his words. We who stood there knew that the announcer felt that it was most unlikely that Oliver would have good luck. You could tell that he was thinking of the 104 feet of ladder and the four feet of water. It almost seemed as if he was striving to assure himself the memory of having said the right thing in case anything happened to Oliver.

The will may have been good, but it was also distinctly gloomy. The speaker had emotionalized himself so completely that for several seconds he forgot to lower his right arm. Then he took it down, and

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Oliver began to climb the ladder. The band, now feverishly gay, played Oliver up to his diving platform.

The opportunity for irony gaped so prodigiously at the event in hand that we feared the worst. During the theatrical season just closed we had seen a number of the plays of Eugene O'Neill, and aspects of life had also been disclosed to us in other quarters. The pattern of existence almost demanded that "Dare Devil" Oliver should die because only nine spectators had paid for admission that evening. The uselessness of it all menaced the moment. None of the nine could have protested if Oliver had said, "No show this evening."

He continued to climb and the wind managed to shake the ladder, even though his weight was on it. "What a silly thing it will be if he gets killed," we said, and we thought of the morning of the armistice and other things which reminded us that death remains the most poorly motivated of all happenings which we know.

Oliver, the climb finished, went about his business slowly. He kept looking at the flag and for several moments he held his hand up against the wind. But the matter of the leap itself was wholly settled in his

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mind. He was merely calculating and amending the details.

At last he came to the front of the diving platform and turned his back toward the tank. He leaned slowly. There was still time to stop. Now there wasn't. He had begun to fall. The movement was still slow, but it had become inevitable. The familiar and useful rule which we learned in school that a body falls sixteen feet the first second and then much faster didn't seem to work. Oliver's body turned an important but highly casual somersault in the air and with a sudden sprint his feet hit the water squarely in the middle of the tank and the spray flew over our heads.

The next thing we knew Oliver was blowing water out of his mouth. The band took up approximately where it had left off. Oliver bowed politely to rapturous eighteen handed applause, slipped on a bathrobe and skipped away. He was absolutely free until 3:30 o'clock on the following afternoon.

After Oliver didn't get killed we began to wonder why and decided that it was because he was an artist. The high dive was his own affair and he went through with it in exactly the same manner for nine

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people as for 900. Even 1,000, more or less, could contribute nothing nor subtract nothing from the curved line of his back just before the fall clutched him. It was beauty strictly of his own making.

We had exaggerated in our mind the temptation which he offered to all ironic high gods. They couldn't play jokes on Oliver. He was much too engrossed in the job in hand to care whether his final fall came before a Monday night crowd or a Saturday one. It is more likely, we suppose, that some day he will trip on a curbing.

But if a man is a complete artist, and maybe Oliver is, even that sort of thing is not so funny. A person actually inspired to high diving or anything else which brings beauty into the world ought to be so set in his purposes that his life is all one piece. Once that has been accomplished he can have much the best of any joshing back and forth with the old ladies of the scissors and thread. He need only say to the one who snips, "You may cut whenever you are ready."

SALVATION FREE AND EASY

UNTIL last Sunday we were wholly anti-radio. But up to that time the only selection from the air which we had ever heard was "Medley of Irish Reels—Accordion."

Even when you get right on top of an accordion it doesn't sound like much, and possibly the medley was indifferently selected and maybe the artist was of no great consequence. At any rate, there was too much of tin in these tunes which grated faintly and unpleasantly upon the ear, and we decided impulsively never to become a radio fan.

Our antagonism did not rest wholly on æsthetic grounds. Some of our income is derived from lectures, and if broadcasting continues to grow it seems to us most unlikely that people will pay for talks when they can be picked out of the air for the asking. Of course it is possible in time that some

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device may be discovered whereby listening will be restricted to those who pay a fee. But even if it were possible for us to gain a job under such circumstances, it would not suit our methods at all. As things are now we say to ourself, "This is the first time we have ever spoken in Utica and so it will be safe to use the mule story."

The lecturer is in a sorry plight indeed when he runs the risk of having all his time-tried material scattered to the ends of the earth whenever he opens his mouth. He can then sell his speech just once and must be forever thinking up new things to say or retire.

However, now that we have experienced the magnificent achievements of the radio we are not selfish enough to let our own interests stand in the way of the public good. Last Sunday we heard a sermon over the radio and we were converted immediately to broadcasting. Four of us sat in a pleasant, sunny room and three were smoking while the other was drinking ginger ale. Quite idly the lovelaw began to monkey with the knobs and disks and buttons and suddenly there came a voice out of the trumpet on top of the bookcase. And the voice said, "In Africa white ants will sometimes attack a giant tree. No

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one sees their going or their coming. The tree stands seemingly rugged and stalwart, but it is in fact only an empty shell, which is doomed to fall before the first strong wind."

"I've got two white aunts in Rochester," said one of the listeners uneasily, and tapped his chest to ascertain if he sounded hollow.

The trumpet had become inarticulate for the moment and breathed forth squeaks and wheezes, but already we had heard enough to be spurred on to think and talk of the wonders, the glories and the tragedies of nature.

"Science is a marvelous thing," said one member of the party, and he began to describe a dynamo which he had visited in Akron.

And although he was a man without technical training, who knew none of the jargon, he was able to make his theme just as incomprehensible as if he had been an expert.

When he had almost finished, another man began to talk about rheumatism and soon conversation was practically general.

The clear voice of the loud-speaker on the book-case cut through it all. "So it is with the soul of man," said the trumpet.

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"It isn't science; its a sermon," we exclaimed, and started to throw away the cigarette until we observed that the more experienced radio fans went on smoking quite calmly. The lovelaw continued to sip his cooling drink. The man who had rheumatism every October thought he had discovered the cause of it and told us. We began to tingle with excitement. An ancient and an unfulfilled ambition was being gratified. For twelve years, from the age of five to sixteen inclusive, we had always wanted to talk during a sermon. Indeed, there had been times when we could hardly restrain the desire to shout out loud, to scream or to shuffle. It was not permitted. Even itching was looked upon with disfavor.

Church was a place where you put on stolidity like a straitjacket. You ached with attentiveness. Occasionally in those old days the minister said something which stirred us, but there was no way in which that emotion could be made manifest. The church was Episcopalian and it was the custom to allow the minister to go ahead without any audible expression of approval or dissent.

Once, on the first Sunday after Easter, the rector told an amusing anecdote, but nobody laughed. Coming from the pulpit, it had taken on authority

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and sanctity. When a sermon ended, the congregation went out sedately, without applause, and dispersed decently to their homes.

But getting home did not break the spell for us. Generally we required an hour or more to recover our natural speaking voice. "White meat, please," we would whisper down the table, for the silence of the sermon time had pressed us so closely that a little lingered in our marrow.

"And like the white ants of Africa," said the voice from the trumpet, "there are secret sins which steal unaware into the heart of man."

We almost crushed the cigarette, holding it tight to remind ourself that at last revolt was possible. Some half-forgotten precept was stirring and urging us to fold our hands. There was a tightness in our throat, but with an effort we smashed through.

"The road to salvation," said the trumpet, and we suddenly drowned out the voice and its message. "Did you ever try giving up red meat?" we shouted at the man who had rheumatism every October.

For half a second we trembled, and it would scarcely have surprised us if lightning had leaped

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out of the clear sky or she bears walked through the kitchen door.

“Eternal damnation,” cried out the radio preacher.

“Who’s got a Camel and a match?” we asked.

THE LAST REVIEW

WHENEVER an artist thinks that the community does not sufficiently appreciate him, he takes an appeal to posterity. I wonder where this notion comes from, that posterity is equipped with superior judgment and wisdom? Just how does it get that way? Posterity is as likely to be wrong as anybody else. The artist of to-day who seeks this deferred judgment is merely appealing to the grandchildren and the great grandchildren of folk who thought that "Abie's Irish Rose" was one of the finest plays ever produced in America.

For all I know, "Abie's Irish Rose" may endure through the centuries, and then the professors will assert that it must be great because it has survived so sturdily. I think it is entirely possible that a number of things which have been established as classics through sheer persistency are no great shakes. I

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cannot read Greek tragedy in the original, but much of it seems dull stuff in English translation. And perhaps it is. Life does not inevitably purify itself like a running stream. There is terrific stamina in stuff and nonsense. A thing is neither true nor beautiful merely because the world has clung to it for a thousand years. Centuries of belief in the flatness of the world were not enough to make it flat, and it may well be that certain works of art upon which permanence has been conferred really are flat, even though they have been hailed as complete and rounded by generations of critics.

Some geniuses have lived and died without recognition, only to be discovered and honored by later and less preoccupied generations. And others never have been recognized at all in any age and never will be. I am willing to grant that the sum total of wisdom in ten generations tends to rise higher than the wisdom of any single generation. But wisdom has very little to do with artistic appreciation. That must be to some extent a matter of emotional sensitivity, and the emotional content of the world remains about the same no matter how many dark ages and light ones are thrown in for good measure.

But if posterity is not completely competent to set

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things straight, who is? I believe the correct answer is nobody. No critic can fashion measuring rods and other devices for accurate survey. The whole matter will have to be taken up, along with much other business, on Judgment Day. I have faith that there will be critics in heaven. There only can injustices be ironed out. An adjective will be taken away from one poet and added to the store of some other whom the world held more lightly. Angels will be set to whittling down superlatives. And as they whittle they will chuckle and sometimes laugh out loud at things which mankind insisted on calling eternal, transcendental and supreme.

I trust that some large section of reserved seats will be set aside for newspaper critics. I think that the revelation of Divine wisdom in regard to books and plays will be even more interesting than the manifestation of heavenly standards in regard to souls. I am more eager to know whether Thackeray was actually greater than Dickens than I am to find out whether Henry Ford was on the whole a better citizen of the cosmos than Napoleon Bonaparte.

Possibly some standing of the critics after the manner of the scheme instituted by Variety will be displayed on a huge heavenly blackboard. There are

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almost sure to be upsets. It is even possible that these final, five star edition reviewers will decide that Macaulay didn't have a good style at all. They may hand down the decision that the worth of the King James Bible as English literature was slightly exaggerated. Consider the sensation if this Supreme Court should establish by a vote of 5 to 4 that Marlowe was a more eloquent dramatic poet than William Shakespeare!

You see this court will be quite unabashed by all previous traditions. It will be tradition. Angels have no inhibitions. They will, if they choose, flick away with one finger everything which Stuart P. Sherman has said. Even the name of Mencken will be less than dust. When George Jean Nathan attempts to strike awe and terror into the hearts of all present by telling what he saw in Das Grossespeil Haus in Prague in the summer of 1905, he will be pushed back into his seat. If this court of super-critics thinks that "The Show-Off" is more fun than "As You Like It," that is precisely what it will say. It will be a great day.

But probably I am far too optimistic in suggesting that these critical decisions will be accepted as final beyond the hope of argument. The true artist will

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remain a rebel when awards go against him. The one who is slighted is almost sure to appeal to some group of opinion which lies behind and beyond immortality. The novelist who is insufficiently appreciated in that court of last resort will unquestionably contend that he has not been understood. He will assert that this is not his true public, and with shoulders thrown back and head erect he will stalk away from the gold bar of heaven and seek a road to hell, where he may find enough subtlety of intelligence and sensitivity of feeling to make it possible for him to gain a friendly hearing.

Under certain circumstances I will be much inclined to follow the rebel novelists. There will be small comfort for me in heaven unless that grandest jury decides that Dickens snivelled inordinately, and that Shaw was worth ten of Barrie.

It might be, although I have no great faith in the matter, that the inspired reviewers, along toward the dusk of whittling day, will get around to saying something pleasant about "The Sun Field" and "The Boy Grew Older." That would be agreeable, but it would come much too late to help royalties.

BETHLEHEM, DEC. 25

WHEN we first came into the office it looked like a dreary Christmas afternoon. To us there is something mournful in the sight of a scantily staffed city room. Just two men were at work typing away at stories of small moment. The telegraph instruments appeared to be meditating. One continued to chatter along, but there was nobody to set down what it said.

Its shrill, staccato insistence seemed momentous. But telegraph instruments are always like that. Their tone is just as excited whether the message tells of mighty tremors in the earth or baby parades at Asbury Park. Probably a job in a newspaper office is rather unhealthy for a telegraph instrument. The contrivance is too emotional and excitable to live calmly under the strain. Even an old instrument seldom learns enough about news values to pick and choose suitable moments in which to

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grow panicky. As soon as a story begins to move along a wire the little key screams and dances. It is devoid of reticence. Every distant whisper which comes to it must be rattled out at top voice and at once. Words are its very blood stream and for all the telegraph instrument knows one word is just as good and just as important as another.

And so the one restless key in the telegraph room shrieked, and whined, and implored listeners. We tried to help by coming close and paying strict attention, but we could not get even the gist of the message. It seemed to us as if the key were trying to say, with clicking tumult, that some great one, a King perhaps, was dead or dying. Or, maybe, it was a war and each dash and dot stood for some contending soldier moving forward under heavy fire. And again, it might be that a volcano had stirred and spit. Or great waves had swept a coast. And we thought of sinking steamers and trains upended.

Certainly it was an affair of great moment. Even though we discounted the passion and vehemence of the machine there was something almost awe inspiring in its sincerity and insistence. After a time it seemed to us as if this was in fact no long running narrative, but one announcement repeated over and

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over again. And suddenly we wondered why we had assumed from the beginning that only catastrophes were important and epoch making. By now we realized that though the tongue was alien we did recognize the color of its clamor. These dots and dashes were seeking to convey something of triumph. That was not to be doubted.

And in a flash we knew what the machine said. It was nothing more than, "A child is born." And of course nobody paid any attention to that. It is an old story.

AROUND A ROUND TABLE

REVIEWERS of books and of plays are fond of saying, "The trouble with the work of this author is that the character which he presents does not develop." Many of the most interesting modern plays are in revolt against this assumption that the story of a man or woman must be the story of growth or decay.

We have specifically in mind "The Show-Off," by George Kelly. Aubrey Piper, the chief figure in "The Show-Off," is precisely the same sort of person at the final curtain as he was in the opening scene. Indeed, the whole lift of the play consists in the admirable tenacity of the man's individuality. The characteristics to which he clings are for the most part unlovely, but nobody can watch the play to the end without being thrilled at the sight of a person who is not to be hammered out of his own peculiar consistency.

There was somewhat the same notion, you may

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remember, in Molnar's "Liliom." The hero of that play went through even the fire of purgatory and came out unchanged.

Tales of this sort seem to us more reassuring to the human spirit than stories of repentance, remorse and conversion. One likes to find stability in personality. The notion of heaven itself may well be a little disturbing, because we know it as a place where man is magnified. By this process he becomes finer, but he also becomes different.

This seriously compromises the assurance that in that realm we shall meet again and know all those we loved. Few of us have loved people for their potentialities. It may be that it was not even the virtues of these others which drew us close. Vices and prejudices were essential notes in such tunes of temperament as we found endearing. Perhaps we liked Alexander for arrogance, Thomas for mendacity and Louise for downright depravity. How can we know any of them when they have been reconstructed through redemption?

It is conceivable, of course, that in the kingdom of the blessed we shall find in the little waiting group one who wears a tag saying, "I am Thomas," or "This is Alexander," and "Here is Louise."

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But this is an Alexander who says, "Of course I may be wrong, as I often am." That is not the Alexander whom we knew and liked on earth. If there is to be a friendship it will have to begin all over again. The man is a stranger.

And Louise, this winged Louise, remarks, "It's a lovely afternoon for righteousness."

With a sinking heart we realize that it will continue to be fine weather for good deeds through all eternity. It is a Louise to command admiration, awe and respect. Louise has died.

The newspaper advertisement said that a person could hardly expect to attend a football game in comfort unless he bought one of the coats. It added that the price had been so materially reduced that every purchaser had a right to regard himself as a fortunate investor.

We bought a coat and until yesterday it was entirely satisfactory. More than that, we were rather enthusiastic about it—until yesterday. It was yesterday that we went, by some unlucky chance, to the zoo in Central Park. The seals did not disturb us and we watched the bears, brown and white, with perfect equanimity. Turning south from the bear

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den we paused in front of a cage which contained a small furry animal. To our astonishment he took one look at us and then retreated to the far corner of his confine and began to make whimpering noises.

A horrid realization came to us. We read the sign above the cage and, just as we feared, it said "Raccoon." By that time we were a good deal more embarrassed than he was. Fear and loathing was his trouble, but at least there was nothing for him to be ashamed of.

Naturally we knew when we bought the coat that the fur of the raccoon was not simply sheared off each season like the wool of a sheep, but at that time we did not realize the size of raccoons. We had fancied an animal a good deal larger. No notion had entered our head of the number of raccoons which must have made the supreme sacrifice before our coat could be constructed. Now we knew that there had been shambles and a massacre. No wonder the little fellow in the cage retreated to the far corner.

Our first impulse was to plead ignorance. We thought of telling him that after all we had not ordered the coat in advance, but had merely happened upon it a ready-made garment, long after the destruction had already been accomplished. If we

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had not bought it, somebody else would. But the day was much too cold and gloomy to solace a frightened raccoon with sophistries. He wanted peace and silence in which to forget, rather than explanations.

And so we went away and looked at the inclosure in which the cow lives. She seemed placid enough and the thought of beefsteaks must have come from our own guilty sub-conscious. Next door were pigs, and there we did not care to pause, either, and review our relations with the animal kingdom. At length we found the llama and peace of mind, for, to the best of our knowledge and belief, we have never been instrumental in doing anything to him or any of his kind.

We were not quite fair to the grip while we had it. Now that it is gone, many of its aspects seem benign. For instance, there was fever, which distinctly belongs among the pleasurable sensations. Of course it is a pleasure to be taken in moderation. There are points along the thermometer where the scorching becomes too great for comfort. But a reasonably discreet fever, say between 101 and 102, is distinctly exhilarating.

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We feel lighter than we ever did in health. In fever times there even comes to us a confidence that we could dance were we minded to. And it would be a dance which swayed midway between floor and ceiling. Soon the inclination passes, for as the fever grows gusty it sets up little whirlpools in the body. It is possible to lie quite still and at the same time move. The motion is that of one floating easily on top of big breakers in a heavy sea.

On and on we soar, on the upswing out of bed and boredom. As long as the tide holds, nothing in particular matters. Things undone are of the slightest possible consequence. The things which we ought not to have done are of equal unimportance. Fever sharpens the mind and dulls the conscience. At the very crest of the hot and curling sea one is washed as free from sense of sin as any newly minted angel. There is nothing to do until to-morrow, and there is no to-morrow.

But then the clutch of the ebb seizes hold. The descent to life begins. Worries and particularities reach out. But they miss you. Yes, a really hearty fever will never quite let you down into the clutching hands. Just in time the upbeat begins. Soon the big hands are only fluttering flecks and instead of grasp-

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ing at you they merely wave farewell. The upward rush stirs a breeze against your face. But it is a hot wind. It grows more scorching. That's the sole trouble with fevers. If there were only such a thing as a cool fever nobody would dream of enduring health.

Just why anybody should take pride in the height of his temperature, we do not know. We admit a distinctly warm and possessive feeling about our own temperature whenever it becomes enterprising. Nor is this feeling unusual. George Jean Nathan is not exactly a man given to open demonstrations of interest. Only once have we seen him lose his calm and detached poise. It happened during the influenza epidemic of a few years back. We met him at a musical comedy while we were convalescing. Nathan remarked that we had been absent from plays for some time and asked the reason. We mentioned influenza and immediately he was all aglow.

"How high was your temperature?" he asked with animation.

"One hundred and three," we told him, lying a little.

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He beamed with satisfaction. "Mine was 104."

Up to date there has been no play in the American theatre which has pleased Nathan half as well as influenza.

Some of the book stores, we understand, have refused to handle "Mayor Hylan of New York—An Autobiography." To us it seems one of the jolliest books of the year. There has been nothing like it since Horatio Alger jr. died. "During a parade," writes the Mayor, "not long ago, a poorly dressed woman in the crowd yelled a greeting at me and I turned around and waved back at her. With me at the time was a man who said: 'You should not do that, Mr. Mayor. You shouldn't pay any attention to a common person like that. It isn't dignified.' I replied: 'How do you know she is common? Because she is poorly clad does not mean that she is common?'"

As the Mayor adds: "A little more of this spirit of charity and a little less of the mad, ignoble scramble for wealth and power will do more to repair our injured social fabric than the most learned discourses on social justice or political economy."

Many a ruler upset by the anger of the hungry

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mob might have avoided catastrophe if he had only possessed the wisdom of Mayor Hylan. Poor Marie Antoinette was forced at length to bow her head to the guillotine because she lacked the foresight to shake a day-day to the commoners whenever they murmured for bread. And John, the King of England, need not have granted Magna Charta. He could quite easily have propitiated the rebellious barons with a pleasant "Cheerio!" Down went Charles the First all because he failed to say "Ah, there!" whenever he met a Roundhead. Moreover, it may not be generally known that Julius Cæsar staved off assassination for years merely by adopting the practice of never failing to remark, "Is it hot enough for you?" whenever he met a plebeian.

We are something like Cæsar and Mayor Hylan ourself. Often on railroad journeys we have observed men laboring along the track under the terrific tribulation of the sun. We have noticed the sag of the shoulders, the tiredness of the eyes, and have been unable to forget the dumb misery which must press down upon the man who fights each day with every ounce in his back and shoulders to win a bare subsistence. Common! Not a bit of it. These

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are the straining sinews upon which rest all the comforts of our modern civilization. And a great wave of pity sweeps over us. These toilers are brothers. Impulsively we reach into our pocket for a handkerchief and as the train sweeps round the bend we lean far out and wave as if our heart would break.

Who are we, who was Cæsar, who is Mayor Hylan, to neglect an opportunity to bring a little cheer and helpfulness into the lives of the unfortunate?

At the dentist's yesterday we had an ideal restored. For a good many years George Washington seemed to us the most attractive hero in American history. He was the only one who appeared to be able to sweat for an ideal and still get a good deal of fun out of life. His scheme of things included pleasure. But about a year ago we happened upon an account of a White House dinner by somebody who had dined with Washington. He set down the fact that throughout the elaborate function Washington said not a single word and glowered continually. Accordingly, our conception of the Father of His

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Country as patriot and roisterer too seemed no longer tenable.

However, now everything is all right. We can't remember just how Dr. Burgess happened to supply us with the necessary information. Like most dentists, it is his habit to converse largely in questions. Even yesterday, we remember, he first manacled and gagged us with steel bridges and lint and then inquired, "What did you think of 'Back to Methuselah'?"

It must have been later that he invited a comparison between Peckinpough and Scott. During a half second, in which a few obstacles were removed in order to make breathing possible, we answered him by saying, "We don't think Washington will finish better than third."

Somehow or other we always keep up the fiction of pretending to believe that Dr. Burgess really wants replies to his questions. At any rate, he nodded and made us swallow one corner of a rubber sheet.

"I saw his teeth yesterday," he said. He has one of those minds which work rapidly and skip over intervening details. We managed to indicate by means of violent pantomime with our right hand and

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shoulder that we didn't know whose teeth he was talking about.

"Yes," said the doctor, "I was in the museum of the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery yesterday and I saw George Washington's false teeth. I've seen them a great many times."

We wanted to ask whether he had gone to Baltimore to see the teeth or on some other business, and whether he made regular trips, but we didn't have enough gestures at our command to express so much. By this time we could no longer employ our right shoulder, as the doctor was using it as an elbow rest.

"No," he said, "I don't suppose they'd seem very good teeth according to modern standards. They didn't have porcelain then; dentists didn't—they didn't really have what you'd call dentists. They carved them out of ivory. Of course, they didn't know anything about suction. It was a man named Greenwood that made them—Dr. Greenwood. He fastened them in with gold springs. One on each side. I guess they must have joggled around a good deal."

And now we know that no flaw in character was responsible for the fact that Washington glowered

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and was silent all through that dinner as the steak and the mutton and the wild goose passed in front of him. It was neither his morale nor his manners which were slipping.

WHY I AM NOT A WELL-DRESSED MAN

SOCIETY is not to blame. The fault is my own. I had my chance. For more than a year I shared an office with a writer who conducted a column called "What The Well-Dressed Man Will Wear." It was generally assumed that this would be a great lesson to me, but at the end of the year the column conductor was fired and I looked precisely the same as at the beginning of the experiment.

I have always felt that it was his failure to influence me for the better which broke his heart.

Of course I did learn in time what I ought to wear, but the responsibility of always doing the right thing was too much for me. A well-dressed man can hardly have time enough to be anything else. And there isn't any sense to it. In male attire elegance seems to have become a synonym for discomfort.

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No man has ever been born into the world who does not itch a little in evening clothes. Train a lad from infancy and a high collar will still harass his chin.

Take that advertisement which reads "How Did Your Garters Look This Morning?" My inclination is to answer "Terrible" and then, after a moment's pause for effect, to add "What of it!" I don't think I'm really what you would call garter-conscious. Without stopping to look I couldn't even tell you what color they are.

Sometimes I go for months without ever giving my garters a thought. There are just two kinds of garters—good and bad. Good garters are the ones which keep your socks up and bad garters are those that don't. Black, white, red, yellow and brown are equal in my sight. There is no reason to draw a color line. No garter which does its work faithfully and quietly will ever be discriminated against by me.

I have somewhat the same feeling about socks. They should know their place. Male hosiery ought to be seen and not heard. The latest style which provides for black and white checks makes no appeal. My ankles are my own business. I have no

WHY I AM NOT A WELL-DRESSED MAN

desire whatsoever to invite comment. If a person wants to express himself let him look higher. A little recklessness becomes a necktie, but the ankles of men were designed by nature for mere utility and it is ridiculous to try and impart to them any quality of estheticism or entertainment.

Still it isn't quite fair for me to act like a martyr in regard to all this. More than mere devotion to a principle has reduced me to my present estate. Once a group of male relatives decided that something ought to be done about me. They felt that the whole family was being brought into disrepute and so they got together and raised a purse for me to carry to the best tailor in the town. Nothing was left to my discretion. I began to feel like an artist's model as the tailor and all his collaborating experts circled around me.

There passed a weary time. Again and again I had to go to the shop while an expert in freehand drawing chalked designs on my back which looked for all the world like a chart of the movement of the ball in the first half of a Yale-Harvard football game. But work as they would they could not prevent a fumble.

Twelve hours after I left the shop in my new

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suit the Spring rains began, and now those clothes look exactly like all the rest which were unpremeditated garments supplied at a reasonable figure to anybody who was prepared to go up two flights.

Somehow or other clothes just won't cling to me.

I suppose I must have a form, but it is one which no self-respecting suit cares to follow. This secession and recession is most evident in waistcoats. A vest of mine may begin by extending almost to the knee and in a week's time it will have climbed and climbed hand over hand until I could wear it as a fascinator.

My job as a journalist requires me to crawl around on my hands and knees only upon special occasions and yet before a month is out I have to tack when walking against head winds.

Evolution had manifested certain intentions in regard to the human toe, but along comes the boot-maker and attempts to exercise the veto power.

The maker of feet and the maker of shoes have never talked things over and agreed on any cooperative plan.

Above size twelve I find there is very scant opportunity for selection in shoe shops. Only those

WHY I AM NOT A WELL-DRESSED MAN

models which provide great open spaces are available for me. The assumption seems to be that in such sizes grace of line is not of moment. We in the thirteen class are so many lumberjacks to the shoe manufacturer. Against that I make no complaint except that these Brobdingnagian brogans make me a marked man. When I walk into restaurant or cabaret the waiters form a hollow square and prepare to sell their lives dearly. Flasks are hidden. The orchestra ceases to play and the proprietor very ostentatiously begins to put up the shutters. I am invariably identified by the very sound of my tread as one who has pounded many pavements and has just been snatched off my beat for plain clothes duty in the apprehension of Volstead violators.

Though I may seem to smile at much of this my heart has been close enough to breaking many a time. In several fields of literary and dramatic criticism my opinion is outlawed. Once upon a time, I was bold enough to object to plays and stories about life in the smart Long Island set with a dogmatic, "This is not faithful to the people of whom the author is writing. They don't behave in such fashion.'

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I had my downfall and rebuke and I am no longer venturesome. The play which aroused my ire concerned week-end frivolity in Great Neck. Now I had spent a Sunday in Great Neck and I felt competent to criticize. I did not remember having observed anybody kissing the housemaid or sitting down to discuss immortality with the butler. And so I sneered at the play and said that the authoress quite obviously was writing of a society with which she was altogether unfamiliar.

She had her revenge. There was a first night just a week later and as I started up the aisle I observed a woman in the back of the house intently regarding my shoes. She kept staring at them until I felt that I too must look. To my discomfort I found that they were somewhat below my best standard. As it happened the roads over which I traveled that month had been muddy for several weeks. As I passed the woman playwright she lifted her eyes from the muddy boots and gave me a contemptuous smile of triumph. It was an expressive smile which seemed to say, "What can a man who wears shoes like that know about the nature of society life in Great Neck, Long Island?" There was no answer.

WHY I AM NOT A WELL-DRESSED MAN

A year or so ago I was much encouraged to read in the newspapers that the King of Spain had started the fashion of wearing a soft shirt and attached collar with a dinner coat. I had been doing it for some time, but now that he was helping in the movement I felt that we might get somewhere. Unfortunately he dropped out of the fight after a single summer. They had cabinet meetings in Spain and dissuaded him. Apparently the feeling was that this was the entering wedge of radicalism. The prime minister feared that a king who was attempting to get a little ease around the neck might go further and decide that a crown wasn't very comfortable either. And so Alphonso quit and left me to carry on the fight alone.

Generally speaking I think that "a sweet disorder in the dress" ought not to be a matter of plan. It should just happen that way. If a man is going to take thought and pains he might as well go the whole distance and wear checkered socks and look to his garters.

While it is true that I have never been able to achieve the better sartorial effects it is not so that I am among those who affect bohemian attire. My clothes may be poor things but they are my own.

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I am not their slave, to be sure, but neither are they mine. Once I knew a village poet of whom a cruel observer said, "I wonder who he gets to wear his collars for the first three days."

I am not in that class. I am what I am without premeditation. Never have I planned to look any way in particular. And taking thought about clothes seems to me a little contemptible. Beau Brummell is not worth emulation.

Let us look instead to the fireman—some fireman who has just been wakened by an alarm. He does not stop to cogitate what sort of tie will go well with his socks. There is no period of concentration on the problem of a suitable handkerchief. No indeed, his only concern is to get on enough clothes and get them on quickly. The community demands nothing more of him.

It would be a much better world if the same dispensation applied to all men. And if the world will not grant us this freedom let's go and take it anyway.

BE-KIND-TO-ADJECTIVES WEEK

BUT at least we profited artistically at the races. The sport exercises a tremendous influence for good in the community and it might do an even nobler service if every critic were compelled to attend at least once a year. From the horsemen we might all learn something of high respect for adjectives. The true follower of the turf enforces a precision of speech which is not known elsewhere in this country.

One afternoon we happened to win a bet, and in the careless, impulsive way which so often fastens itself upon dramatic critics, we remarked: "That's a great horse."

At the moment the horse seemed all of that. Unfortunately, we addressed the remark to a man confirmed in racegoing and he regarded us with cold

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hostility and then walked away without explanation. Another member of the group was more charitable in recognizing our inexperience and undertook to point out the grave blunder we had committed.

"King Solomon's Seal," he said, "happens to be a fair plater, but if you had been speaking of Zev or My Own your remark would have been offensive to a true turfman. Down here we are most punctilious about using the phrase 'a great horse.' It isn't done more than about once in a decade. I think you might call Man O' War a great horse, although there are a few who wouldn't even concede that. The rest that have been running in your time are good horses or bad horses."

This attitude seemed to us merely swanky. Possibly we have an unfortunate tendency always to suspect the sincerity of persons who insist upon precision in expression, but in this case the standard claimed by our turf friend was confirmed the next day. At the Music Box Revue we found Max Hirsch in the seat just in front of us. Hirsch trains Sarazen, the gre—we mean the promising two-year-old owned by Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt. Sarazen has won all his races in most impressive style, upon every sort of track, and has conceded

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pounds to his competitors. The man next to Hirsch leaned over and asked him confidently: "What do you really think of Sarazen?"

The trainer thought hard and considered his words carefully and then he replied with bubbling enthusiasm, "I think he's a nice horse."

And that suggests to us a method by which we may in time cure ourself of adjectival recklessness. First of all, we will establish in our mind a picture of the great dormitory in which the adjectives live. At midnight, when the time comes for writing dramatic criticisms, these adjectives are all asleep. Libidinous lies cot to cot with Fragile. Whimsical sleeps with his feet on the pillow and his head under the blanket. Freudian, that foreign fellow, has a smile on his lips. Perhaps he dreams.

But there is no smile upon the face of the sleeper in the next bed or any sign of life save the slightly wheezy breathing of one worn to exhaustion by protracted and constant toil. And he has earned his rest, for this is Intriguing. The bed of Charming has been placed apart in an alcove at the request of the other adjectives, for she snores a little. And to the right we find a poor fellow whose cot is within easy distance of the brass pole which descends

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through an aperture to the street level. His trousers are tucked inside his boots and he has retired without removing his socks. This is Thrilling.

After witnessing the peaceful domesticity of the adjectives at midnight we shall begin to picture that other scene which must occur every evening as the dramatic critics get to work. Such a tumult and a roaring. The dormitory of the adjectives is agog and more. Preposterous has made off with the shirt of Quaint. Good and Clean collide upon the pole only to discover that their haste was unnecessary, since they must wait for Wholesome, who can't find his trousers. Theatrical has been and gone these many hours and Artificial is on his toes awaiting the signal. Sophisticated stirs, but turns over and sleeps again, for he knows that it is a John M. Golden opening. Advanced and Shocking sit up and josh back and forth, confident that they too are in for the night. Surefire is the butt of their merriment and he sadly declines a wager of 50 to 1 that his name will be drawn before the evening is out.

With all this in mind we shall pause the next time the impulse comes to use an adjective. We will not forget the fatigue upon the face of Intriguing

BE-KIND-TO-ADJECTIVES WEEK

or the drooping shoulders of Wholesome. No, when we come again to review a show we will bear in mind the woes of all the adjectives and exclaim, "Let them sleep."

THE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT MYSTERY PLAY

A NOTION for a somewhat different mystery play has just come to us, but, unfortunately, we may not have the time to develop it, and so anybody else who is interested may help himself to the idea. The hero of the play is an author, possibly a dramatic critic. Anyway, he is a sturdy and courageous American of the highest possible type. Yes, we will make him a dramatic critic.

The villain is an actor, though not a very good one. In a review appearing two weeks before the opening of the play the hero has had occasion to refer to the villain—tolerantly enough, it seems to us—as “adequate.” But the villain is insulted. Before becoming an actor he spent some years as an electrician’s assistant. Posing as a gas inspector, the villain manages to gain access to the library of

SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT MYSTERY PLAY

the hero's home on Park Avenue. The butler is called to the phone for a moment and while he is gone the villain attaches an infernal machine to the hero's typewriter. The contrivance is designed in such a way that if the hero so much as touches a certain key he will inevitably be blown to atoms.

At this point a nice technical problem arises. Will it heighten the mystery or detract from it if the audience remains in ignorance as to which is the fatal letter upon the typewriter? Probably it is best that they should know. This can be done easily enough by giving the villain a short exclamatory soliloquy in which he says: "There now, I've looped up that bomb containing 318 pounds of nitroglycerine with the 'I' on his typewriter. Just let him get personal and he is lost."

We hear the butler coming back up the hall. The villain sneaks out the French window, but before he goes he casts one more look of approval upon his devilish device and says with a marked sneer: "I guess that will be adequate." He emphasizes the objectionable adjective in a way to make your blood curdle.

Here the curtain descends to indicate a lapse of time. The hero has gone to review the opening

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night of the "Ziegfeld Follies." As the curtain rises again, dawn is breaking. The last edition of the hero's newspaper went to press two hours ago and so it is necessary for him to work feverishly. He approaches the typewriter and prepares to give a summary of his opinion in a single sentence. Every heart in the audience stops beating, and then there is a sigh of relief as the hero abandons his usual practice and begins the article with the editorial "we."

But wait a minute. The suspense has not yet ended. All over the house excited spectators can be heard saying to one another, "Ziegfeld Follies," and spelling out the words. Escape seems impossible. The poor fellow is doubly doomed. By the luckiest chance in the world the hero mentions neither word and refers to the show which he has just seen as "Flo's new opus." This cheap flipness saves his life for the moment, but the dread hand of death still menaces him. As he writes, he reads the words aloud so that the people in the gallery can share in the suspense with those in the first row.

Paragraph after paragraph flows from under his fingers and still he has not employed the fatal vowel.

SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT MYSTERY PLAY

Suddenly he pauses and begins to think. What's up now? With one more paragraph he will be done. It is only necessary to say something nice about the girl who does the Chaldean dance number in the big Urban ballet in the third act. But he happens to be in love with her.

Hello! Look at him. He's getting up. A few spectators in the rear of the house begin to applaud. They think that he has finished his review and that the danger is averted. No such luck. He's going to the dictionary. Every eye in the theatre follows him. He opens the book at the page headed "intort—intuitive." With bated breath the audience watches as his glance flashes past, "intreat," "intrench," "intrenchment," "intrepid," "intricable."

Finally a woman in the third row can stand the strain no longer. In a piercing whisper which resounds throughout the theatre she cries to her escort: "Can you imagine! He's looking up 'intriguing' and he don't know how to spell it." The whisper breaks into a sob. There lies the word at the bottom of the page—"intriguing." The hero copies it out in pencil upon a piece of paper, spelling as he goes along "I-n-t-r-i-g-u-i-n-g." Here are enough "i's" to blow up every tenant in the Regal

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Arms, men, women and little children. Fortunately, the audience is able to comfort itself with the thought that the hero will feel nothing after the first "i."

With slow and steady step he walks back to his machine and sits down. He raises the typewriting finger on either hand. Women in the audience stop their ears. Suddenly the tension breaks as the hero gives a great shout of, "No, I'll be damned if I do!"

"As a Chaldean nautch dancer," he writes, "Mona Merryvale was adequately nautchy." The curtain falls.

We must confess that the last act is something of a let down from the big scene. Some little exposition is necessary. The audience must be told that the hero has taken a week's vacation in order to write a novel but that so far he has done no work and the typewriter has not been touched. Also, that during the interval the Smart Set has appeared and that in Mr. George Jean Nathan's dramatic piece, entitled "Ach Holl," the villain has been referred to as "this gangrenescent Garrick." All this is brought out by means of a conversation between the butler and a scullery maid.

SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT MYSTERY PLAY

Eventually, of course, it develops into a comic love scene. While the butler is kissing the girl, the villain disguised as a blotter salesman slips into the library and removes his bomb. A pretty but rather conventional scene of passion between the hero and Mona Merryvale follows. He asks her to marry him. "Do you think I will be adequate?" she replies archly.

He is about to kiss her when from offstage at a great distance comes the sound of a terrific explosion. Here there is need of dramatic license, for almost immediately we hear newsboys crying their extras. It is difficult to make out the name and it is not until there is added the sound of revelry and of people dancing in the streets that the audience realizes that Nathan has met his fate.

After that the hero and the heroine do kiss and the play ends happily.

HE DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS LOADED

"You cannot argue great poetry or great characterization," says the Evening Post, in taking us to task for lack of enthusiasm about "Antony and Cleopatra"; "you cannot even teach it unless there is some response. Cleopatra did not live in the Bronx, but if she had, the Bronx would undoubtedly have supposed her ill-contrived. She could not talk prose as the modern newspaper conceives prose; she was incapable of sentimentality, even of Mr. Shaw's mild latter-day variety; she was the kind of romantic that Broadway could neither create nor comprehend.

"Broadway and the Bronx have been too much for the usually excellent judgment of Mr. Broun. They do not understand tragedy."

It is our notion that the most poignantly tragic figures must always be drawn from the ranks of the uncomprehending. Very often the edge of our

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pity is dulled because most of Shakespeare's children of misfortune are too articulately aware of their own dramatic stature. We could weep more for Hamlet if he were not so exceedingly well prepared to weep for himself. No harm is done if we fail to feel the whole weight of Cleopatra's sorrow. She is fully competent to appreciate her own suffering and has small need of sobbing from the sidelines.

In many of the Shakespearian tragedies the major part of our sympathy goes to one of the lesser figures. We are moved by the plight of those people at whom Fate lunges suddenly and without preliminary fanfare.

When we read "Romeo and Juliet" for the first time, we realized from the beginning that no enduring good could come to the young man or the young woman. The black spot had been tipped to them even before they stood in the moonlight and talked of love. The road to the rendezvous stretched straight away to the edge of the shadow. And, as they walked, the lovers saw quite plainly the end of their journey. Accordingly, they said nothing which was not wholly and self-consciously suitable for travelers on such a road.

Mercutio met his fate around the bend of a horse-

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shoe curve. For him there was no breathing spell in which he might posture and thus make the mighty accident of destruction seem no more than an appropriate figure in a pattern of his own design. His was an aimless death. No lofty pertinence softened its absurdity. Even his last words were a stammered half-phrase from a sentence.

The dying Romeo said (in part):

“Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavory guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!
Here’s to my love!—O true apothecary!
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.”

Now, that is admirable, of course, but decidedly it is not impromptu. One cannot help realizing that Romeo must have rehearsed his death a little in advance. When the moment came he was magnificently prepared. Indeed, he accepted it so superbly that it is only reasonable to believe that he must have enjoyed his own proficiency in the art of dying.

The Evening Post is entirely correct. Broadway and the Bronx cannot quite understand. They may

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even resent it a little. When death comes to Broadway and the Bronx it invariably presents the rough edges, the incoherence, the awkwardness of a first performance.

Shakespeare could not conceive of tragedy except as a full stop. He needed shears as well as pen. To him, tragedy meant being killed, committing suicide or going mad. The deeper and more deadly tragedy of the man or woman who lives on was not in his repertoire. Younger dramatists have found that often there is more poignancy in a tale of an individual into whose life there enters nothing of violence. He may be truly tragic even though he seems to suffer not at all. Perhaps the most pitiful of all protagonists is the person who is fully resigned to his fate.

A squirrel tearing around in his little circular tread-mill is evidently having no end of fun. He is quite convinced that he is off on a journey. To him the illusion of progress is so perfect that he may quite possibly crinkle his nose, wag his tail or indicate delight by any other mannerism customary to squirrels. But still he is a tragic figure. And a man may smile and smile.

Just once Shakespeare did write a tragic play

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about a character who lived on after the final curtain. He told one tale in which the plight of the central figure depended on the fact that the man had to continue and play out a role to which he was neither suited nor accustomed. Length of days merely served to heighten the pitifulness of his harsh fate. Shylock left the court room condemned to be a Christian.

McGRAW ON MARRIAGE

A NEW phase of a familiar problem has been brought up by John McGraw in his book, "My Thirty Years in Baseball." There have been plays and novels discussing the question of whether the opera singer, the painter or the musician should marry, but the McGraw book widens the field. He devotes an entire chapter to "Should a Ball Player Marry?"

We are under the impression that this is a first book, but it is colored to no great extent by the moderns. There is little indication that McGraw has been influenced by D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce or Sherwood Anderson. It lacks the fearless forthrightness which marks most of the literature of our day. In baseball McGraw is dogmatic. On the question of a ball or a strike or an out at first he will never be caught taking the Galsworthian attitude of

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"There is much to be said on both sides." But in this problem, which he himself has raised, there is a distinct tendency to evade the issue.

Like many of the classicists, McGraw is interested rather more in form than in ideas. He is no Shaw intent upon changing human society. For him it is enough to frisk around a problem, bark a little and depart. To be sure, he does not succeed altogether in concealing his opinion on the matter of celibacy for big leaguers, but it is the unconscious which betrays him. There is no explicit statement which can be used against him.

Still, it must be admitted that he sidesteps cleverly. "I am convinced," writes McGraw, "that nothing helps a young man so much in baseball or in any other profession as a good wife."

The revealing line follows right at the heels of this and somewhat weakens the tribute to domesticity:

"I think, though, that they ought to get married immediately after the World's Series."

When one thinks about it, the line has within it implications of a very far-reaching revolt against the institution of marriage. McGraw is by no means as aloof from the modern masters as he would have

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us believe. "After the World's Series," hey? Figure it out. This means that McGraw would condemn all Red Sox, Phillies, Robins, Senators, Braves, Athletics and probably Cubs, White Sox and Browns to monasticism. It is almost as if one should say, "Oh, yes, I believe in marriage for writers, but let no novelist marry except immediately after winning the Nobel Prize."

But though the position is sophistical, it is ingenious. Not so much can be said for McGraw's statement in praise of marriage. He must have set it down in haste. "Nothing helps a young man so much in baseball or in any other profession as a good wife." Beginning with the intention of doing no more than a book about thirty years of baseball, McGraw suddenly thrusts himself into a position where he must make some attempt to interpret the whole history of civilization.

What is a good wife? He realizes the obligation and sketches in a portrait. In this depiction of the ideal, McGraw reverts to the Victorian. Evidently he has in mind somebody not unlike the heroine of a Thackeray novel. Amelia herself might have sat for it. However, McGraw has chosen a definite, living person whom he remembers.

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"The wife of one of our greatest pitchers," he writes, "would never come to the Polo Grounds on the day her husband pitched. She followed the progress of the game, though, by a rather unique method. Their apartment was on the Heights. From the front window it was possible to see the scoreboard by the aid of a pair of field glasses. This particular wife knew what dishes her husband liked most. One of his favorites was corned beef and cabbage. If the glasses showed the Giants behind, she would immediately start preparing that dish. Upon his arrival home the grouch of defeat would disappear. She would never mention the game until the dinner was over."

Now that plan is well enough for a woman married to a pitcher on a contending club, but McGraw ought to realize that it could hardly be utilized universally by the wives of ball players. It would be a wretched system for the wife of Harry Harper or Al Mamaux or Lou Betts, or indeed anybody married into the pitching staff of the Robins or the Phillies. Consider what a surfeit of corned beef and cabbage would have been imposed upon these men by the end of the season!

And there is another wife of whom McGraw

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speaks with admiration, in spite of the fact that there were obvious dangers in the system which she adopted.

"On one occasion," writes McGraw, "there was a pitcher who suffered through lack of control. His wife went with him on the spring training trip. He knew his failing, but did not have the patience to correct it. His wife, knowing what was required, took charge of him during his off hours and insisted upon his putting in so much practice in the court back of the hotel. There was no escape. Any time he felt lazy she was right on the job. Much of that man's later success was due to that wonderful wife."

But McGraw neglects to tell the sequel. Years went on and that pitcher began to slow up. He was released, first to Milwaukee and later unconditionally. Then he went into the insurance business. A few months later he became afflicted with terrific headaches. They grew so bad that he could not go to work. Doctors of all schools were consulted, but they afforded him no relief. At length he chanced upon a psychoanalyst. Under questioning the former pitcher admitted that he frequently had disturbing dreams. There was one which recurred.

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In the dream he was at the edge of a great, level field. The grass was close cropped, as on the Polo Grounds, but this field was much bigger. At the far edge there stood a person who waved to him. It was his wife. At the beginning of the dream it was always his wife. The pitcher would wave to her and then hurry across the field to meet her. She was rather tall and angular, but as he crossed the field she became short and stocky. And just as he was about to say, "Hello, dear," he invariably noticed that it wasn't his wife at all. It was John J. McGraw. Sometimes he tried running across the field as fast as he could, but the transformation took place just the same. The dream was driving him crazy.

It was the analyst who told us the story. "You see," he explained, "the wife had allowed herself to become the voice of conscience in that household and subconsciously the pitcher had made an identification between her and his manager. I managed to straighten it out after a while. She was a smart woman and after I talked to her she never gave her husband any commands or advice about his work. He went back to baseball. He got a job pitching in the Three-I League."

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"And then he was all right again?" we suggested.

"Well, not exactly," admitted the doctor. "They released him before the end of the season. He didn't have any control."

THE HAPPY HYPO CHONDRIAC

WHEN I decided ten years ago that I was about to die I didn't enjoy the prospect at all. It seemed a great, though largely personal, misfortune. The notion was not wholly my own. A doctor listened to my chest and said that my heart squeaked. He tried to cheer me up by saying that patients with bad hearts often lived to be ninety and then died of heavy colds or automobile accidents.

This failed to encourage me. Ninety seemed pretty young, for a hundred had been my intention. Besides, I had seen many plays and I remembered that whenever a character complained of his heart in the first act he was practically certain to die suddenly along about the middle of the third.

I didn't rest my case solely on the opinion of the first doctor. Medical examinations became a hobby with me. The next physician advised three sets of tennis a day and the one after that suggested not

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more than two holes of golf to be played slowly and without side bets. And of course there were people who wanted me to wear glasses, try arch supports and have my teeth pulled.

Somehow or other it is easier to accept adverse opinions than favorable ones. The men who smiled cheerfully impressed me less than the others who shook their heads dolefully and prescribed drops out of a bottle. But the motive which eventually prompted me to cling to the gloomiest of the predictions was not rational conviction so much as a sentimental and emotional decision.

After a year and a half of experimentation I decided that there was a great deal to be said in favor of having a bad heart. Accordingly I settled the matter beyond discussion by an act of faith. No one is going to get a chance from now on to tell me that the ailment is wholly a delusion and that all I need is regular hours and daily exercise.

Some of the benefits derived are wholly material. It is no small privilege to look even the most persuasive insurance agent in the eye and say: "No, there isn't any point in your telling me the detailed advantages of your new style policy. I can't pass the medical examination."

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When an automobile tire blows out I am not among the passengers who climb out of the car into the dusty road and assist the owner to adjust the spare. Other guests at the week-end party can hardly refuse the invitation to get up at eight-thirty and play around the sportiest nine-hole course in northwestern Connecticut. I use the time for sleeping. When the Winchley girls and their second cousin, Tommy Blair, need a fourth for mixed doubles I am not the missing link. And in New York I don't have to go to see people who live more than three flights of stairs up.

But chiefly the advantages are spiritual. Most of the worrying about dying is done by people in excellent health. Anybody whose heart-beat has done a few long skips for him gets used to the notion. He has experienced the preliminaries. Aided by imagination and indigestion I have fully convinced myself at least a hundred times that I was about to die. By now the sensation doesn't terrify me.

Of course I don't mean that I'm fearless. I can still raise a panic at the prospect of the discomfort and pain of the business of dying. I was on a steamer once which was being shot at by a submarine and I didn't like it at all. And later at Reims

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and at Verdun, where I was working as a newspaper man, I hated the noise and everything connected with the big German shells which went sailing overhead.

But it was getting killed which worried me and not death in the abstract. I think it is a mistake to assume that a rather concrete religious faith is necessary for consolation. I am not without beliefs, but they are all vague and it is pleasanter that way. I think, or rather feel, that there is survival after death. I will be disappointed if there isn't, but it won't spoil my whole eternal life if I'm mistaken. To sleep deep, never to turn over again and blink and yawn—that is a good deal less than tragic.

In the beginning the man who expects to die almost any minute is apt to be a little finicky. He wants to choose his spots. This feeling made a whole year of my life rather dreary. I could not endure the thought of having the final brief paragraph say, "He died while ordering a glass of beer in the Millard J. Fillmore Café," or, "There was a brief disturbance during the rally of the Yankees in the seventh inning while the ambulance surgeon was attending a young man in the press box who died from excitement."

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During that year I stayed away from the Millard J. Fillmore Café and only attended the games of the Giants. I didn't care enough whether they won or lost for my heart to be affected.

And I was just a little snobbish. I never sat down to luncheon or dinner without thinking, "Are these precisely the sort of people in whose company I would care to die?" Later on I grew much more democratic. The exact detail of the final curtain seemed to me less and less important. It was too arduous to be forever bearing in mind a suitable tableau. I don't get to the Millard J. Fillmore Café now, but it has nothing to do with my heart.

In fact only once during recent years have I been plagued by the thought that a potential last situation was wholly unsuitable. That was at Verdun. An old French colonel was showing us around and as we were walking up a certain road a couple of shells came close. He expressed the opinion through an interpreter that it might be well for us to get back to the automobiles which were sheltered behind a cliff. The whole party started in that direction. I wasn't leading the pack, but I was well up among the contenders and in a good position to make a strong bid at the finish. And then the old colonel

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saw a little hill off to the right which reminded him of an error of tactics which the Germans had made in the spring two years before. He stopped in the middle of that unpleasant road and began to tell us about it in French.

By a coincidence, French happens to be the subject which I flunked in my final examinations. All I could understand was that the thing he was describing was just two years late for the newspapers. I took my pulse and found it alarming. However, the sporting nature of the circumstances made some little appeal. If the Germans didn't hurry up in getting me I felt entirely capable of getting myself. But my strongest emotion was a very poignant annoyance and even boredom. There I was listening to a stale and highly technical story in a language which I could not understand. "If I die like this," I thought, "it's going to be awfully useless and silly. I do wish the kind old gentleman would come to the point. I'll bet I could cut something out of that story if I knew what it was about."

While he rambled on I kept shifting from one foot to the other in order to present a moving target. Finally a shell blew up what was left of a tree just off the road. My pulse stayed under water for ten

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seconds and the colonel was reminded that the war was still on. He motioned us toward the automobiles. I got a front seat in the first car.

On the way back to the citadel all the newspaper men professed to have had a stirring afternoon. I smiled a superior smile. Nobody can possibly comprehend the full potentialities of excitement until he has acquired a trick heart.

But of course it doesn't actually take as much as a war to thrill a confirmed cardiac. Blank cartridges in the big scene of the third act, detective plays and hilarious low comedy all serve nicely. This is a little annoying. I have no desire to pay any player the compliment of dying of excitement over his performance. It would be too silly. I ought to know that the heroine is in no actual danger from the cannibals and that the United States Marines will arrive in plenty of time for her to marry the hero and live happily ever after.

It would be still worse to end life through excessive laughter at the antics of any comedian. My friends would arch their eye-brows and say:

"Was that the joke that killed him? Poor fellow, he always did have a rotten sense of humor!"

No, much the best way would be to hold a straight

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flush against four of a kind. To call out, "Nine, ten, jack, queen, king—all green"; to reach then for the chips and to grasp——

What will one grasp? Man is happiest, I think, if he has not quite made up his mind on that point. Dogmatism lives at either end of the range of human speculation. The atheist can hardly take much interest in the business of dying because he has arrived at a very definite conception of what that ending will be. Complete blackness, silence, a void beneath the finger-tips; all that, as I have said, is less than terrible but it is a little dull. None but tired men can look forward to this endless Sunday afternoon.

Still, to tell the truth, the Heaven of many of the evangelists is not much more inviting, not at any rate to anybody who has lived all his life in New York. I rather think that most concrete speculation concerning paradise must have been carried on by country preachers because they always think of it as an urban community. Circuit riders who have wriggled and floundered over muddy back roads to isolated congregations take comfort in the thought of heavenly streets smoothly fashioned out of blocks of gold. One might ride easily, swiftly, safely on such streets.

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But if the zest of your life has been not in safety but rather in danger; if you have been, let's say, an aviator or a man with a bad heart, this eternity of modern improvements does not beckon. In life the aviator and the other have sailed constantly across a most intangible terrain. They have seldom lost the thought of the long swoop away from sound and sun. And in time they like it. For them there will be reserved a little corner in Heaven where danger has been allowed to live. At least a fictional threat to the endlessness of immortality must be created for their benefit.

For the hypochondriac there must be doctors even in Heaven. And that presents another problem. If everything finite and physical has ended, how can the medical men be expected to amuse themselves? It would seem almost essential to permit an occasional appendix and a few tonsils. Otherwise the surgeons will hardly be satisfied.

As for me, I ask just one privilege. Gold and riches are abandoned without heartache, but I would like to have my pulse with me in Heaven. I will want to know every now and then how my heart is behaving.

THE VERY BEST

IN the beginning there was Walter Camp. Taking thought, he decided that virtue was not its own reward and so he decided to exalt one man, or to be precise eleven, above the others. There came into being, then, the All-American Football Team composed of the eleven best players in the land. At first there was some scoffing. In Cambridge the charge was made that Mr. Camp's list represented no more than his opinion as to the eleven best football players in Connecticut. But the scoffing diminished and died. Walter Camp was not only accepted but emulated.

The influence of his example spread far beyond the confines of football: America took to making lists. Within a year I have seen compilations of: the ten greatest books of all time, the six best novels published in February, the twelve greatest women in history, the nine most useful big league ball players,

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the twenty-one cardinal points of social etiquette, the eighty-eight most beautiful women, and the twenty-six articles of faith necessary for salvation.

My memory is not very good. Of course, there have been many more lists. Come to think of it, I do remember "six things which must not be forgotten while doing the fox-trot."

As a matter of fact, Walter Camp should not have all the credit. Harvard has done its share. It was Dr. Eliot who devised the Five-foot Shelf. Possibly the whole movement rests on America's passion for idealism, that is, practical idealism. We want the very best in books and butter, and in order that there shall be no mishap it is necessary that this best shall be set down and codified.

Now and again, I have an uneasy feeling that the movement has gone too far, and that a certain effort is being wasted in trying to tether the intangible and define the indefinable. I remember, with a certain discomfort, the young man from Pittsburgh who asked me to provide a list even more ticklish than all the rest.

"As a constant reader," he wrote, "I am humbly requesting your assistance in the matter of a little experiment that I desire to perform. I find myself

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highly enamored of a superlatively attractive young lady who has, however, one apparent drawback to me. That lies in the fact that she has never cultivated a taste for really worth while reading. Now, my idea is this: that this reading taste may be developed by the reading of a number of the best books in various lines. Will you send me a list of fifty of the very best books. I can promise you that the young lady will make a serious attempt to read them. When she has completed this reading, I shall ask her to make a thoroughly frank statement as to whether a reading habit has been cultivated which will enable her to enjoy good literature. The young lady has been through high school."

That was almost six years ago. I wonder if they have been very happy. I am assuming that they have married for I never sent the list for which the young man asked. Not that I failed to take the matter under consideration. On the contrary, I racked my brains for months over the problem as to just what were the books on which one should wed. At length a formula began to sing through my brain. It ran: "Marry in Ouida and repent in Shaw." But that I kept to myself.

The thing which dissuaded me was the thought

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of the potential strain and agony of that fifty-book courtship. I could imagine the young lady doggedly digging into *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* while the young man sat nearby watching, waiting, twitching with eagerness to catch some sign which might indicate to him whether or not she was actually enjoying good literature. Twice, I seemed to see the determined girl smile wanly. And at such times her lover's face would light up, only to fade again when he realized that this was nothing more than a brave effort, that what he saw was love rather than esthetic appreciation. It was after weeks of turmoil that I came to my decision. I pounded my fist upon the desk and spoke aloud, as I often do in settling a crisis. "Let nature take its course," I said.

Probably that is what happened. Having no list upon which to proceed, I fully believe that the young man followed the dictates of his heart. He came upon her suddenly one evening in the twilight. She was reading a book, but he entered the room so suddenly that there was no chance for her to hide it under a sofa cushion. The gleam of a lamp from across the room was on her hair and on the title page. The youth can hardly have failed to observe that it

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was *The Winning of Barbara Worth* by Harold Bell Wright. But it was the light on her hair which caught his eye. "Put down your Shelley," he cried to her in a voice husky and trembling with emotion. He was far gone in feeling, but not beyond an exquisite tact. The book fell upon the floor and was not thereafter regarded. That night "they read no more."

In my vision I see them now in a home of their own. They have made a literary adjustment. In the evening he puts on his slippers and she reads aloud to him the serials out of "The Saturday Evening Post." He does not mind at all, indeed he rather enjoys the fact, that it is necessary for him to tell her how to pronounce some of the longer words.

When I shouted out "Let nature take its course," that night in my study, I hit upon a slogan very needful for these United States. There is an aching in the land for those pleasant, restful spots which lie a little below the peaks which have been identified as the very best. We are a people who have come to read for up-lift and improvement. Many of us peer at pictures which we do not like because we have been told that they are good for us. We read books so that, having read them, we may talk

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and impress the neighbors. We listen to music which sets no singing in our hearts, because the composer is both dead and great. Enjoyment is the least thing which we demand from any of the arts.

The young man and the young woman were wiser. I am sure that they are very happy.

WISTFULNESS

By chance, yesterday, I dropped into a restaurant called the Algonquin, and happened upon a group of young men, for the most part connected with newspapers and the theatre. They were talking about "Sitting Pretty," which was produced at the Fulton Theatre last night, and they were, without exception, raving over the performance and personality of Gertrude Bryan, who appeared in that musical show. The performance seemed to me good enough as I remembered it, but I could not account for the conflagration until I asked the reason and was told, "She has wistfulness."

If that is true it will be quite useless for dissenters to argue. The wistful will inherit the earth as they always have. And that too is a problem worth scrutiny. Why, I wonder, does the world put such a premium upon wistfulness? And, again, what

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is it that the wistful ones pine for? It is easy to tell by their eyes that there is a longing, but neither fame nor fortune will bring surcease. The wistful are never long without these commodities and the more fortunate and famous they become, by just so much is their obvious yearning intensified.

Most of the great ones of the world belong among the wistful. In that list should be set down the most popular actress of her day, the best-loved playwright and the heavyweight champion of the world. I need hardly say that I am thinking of Maude Adams, James M. Barrie and Jack Dempsey. Miss Adams and Barrie, I believe, were born wistful, but Dempsey never quite qualified until he won the championship.

I realized his qualifications for the first time on the afternoon that he knocked out Georges Carpentier. And it was after the knockout that the curious plaintive peering, which is the mark of the clan, came into his eyes. Eighty thousand fans were cheering "Dempsey! Dempsey! Dempsey!" and he stood by the ropes and acknowledged the applause with a look which went over the heads of the crowd and beyond the rim of the big bowl. It even seemed as if the thing he was seeking lay entirely outside the

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thirty acres of Mr. Boyle. I don't know what the thing was and is. Probably Dempsey doesn't.

Wistful people ask for nothing and get everything, at least everything which can be wrapped up and labeled. The straightforward person who moves through the world speaking up in an audible voice to say, "I want that," will be greatly rebuffed. It seems to be more effective just to look longingly and say nothing.

On the covers of the Christmas and Thanksgiving numbers of the magazines there appears quite frequently a young and conventional wistfuler. He is a small boy. It is snowing and his nose is pressed against the window pane of a shop which displays a roast turkey, an electric train, some simple jewelry or a fur overcoat. The reader is supposed to weep for that small boy, but I am not that reader, because I know that if he continues to press his nose against the window pane and hold the expression for as long as half an hour somebody will happen along who will not only buy him the train and the turkey but the whole blame shop.

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Wistfulness has always been in the world, but its first quantity production was achieved in Ireland. One might assume that overproduction would cause a slump. Since every man, woman and little child in Ireland is wistful, they ought to become anaesthetized to each other. But they don't. The Irish have lived for years by being taken in by each other's wistfulness.

Just two things were conspicuously lacking in Irish life and so the psychologists reasoned that it must be either snakes or freedom for which this people pined. Freedom has come and the Irish still remain wistful. Give them the snakes and not a single quaver will straighten up and heave back its shoulders. Perhaps the commodity for which this entire nation yearns is wistfulness. Those that haven't got it are wistful because of their lack and those that have because of their surfeit.

Once and so often to my great delight, something which I have said turns out to be precisely true. Only this week I wrote that the wistful always inherit the earth and that whoever looks, wistfully, at any object, is pretty sure eventually to get it.

In this contention the news columns conveniently

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bear me out. In The World's story of Patrick E. Crowley, I find:

"He was born beside the line and from toddling days watched with wistful eyes that road's clanking marvels come from a mysterious somewhere down the track."

Mr. Crowley has just been created President of the New York Central Railroad.

At 11 o'clock to-morrow morning I am going to begin looking wistfully at the National City Bank.

“GOOD WOMEN AND GAMES”

IN “The Social Trend,” Prof. Edward Alsworth Ross succeeds in proving, without even making the attempt, that sociology is not an exact science. In his chapter on Prohibition he writes:

“The fact is, whatever social custom bids men do together in token of friendliness will presently become charged with significance and set up a flow of good feeling between the participants. . . . Our ancestors hit upon the custom of touching glasses and swallowing beverages of high alcoholic content. There is no reason to suppose that sipping ‘soft’ drinks together, or smoking together, or playing backgammon together might not serve equally well as a symbol of amity.”

This seems to us extremely slipshod scholarship. No man of science has a right to advance a theory so boldly and at the same time confess that he has

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made no attempt whatsoever to check up his hypothesis by laboratory experimentation.

Prof. Ross seems to be inclined to take the conviviality quotient of “sipping soft drinks” and “playing backgammon” entirely on faith. This is convenient but utterly unscientific.

It is only fair to grant that actual research might conceivably be dangerous as well as arduous. That is not sufficient excuse for shirking. Science cannot live without its ration of martyrs. We are generous enough to believe that Prof. Ross will not permanently evade his responsibilities. His reputation in the community is too high for him to be content to seek permanent shelter in supposition.

Having advanced a theory, it is up to him to prove it no matter what the hardships. The scientific world has a right to expect that within a reasonable time Prof. Ross will deal with this problem again and that this time his conclusions will be based on actual experiments made by himself in “sipping soft drinks” and “playing backgammon.”

Prof. Edward Alsworth Ross, also, shocks us by exhibiting in flagrant form the gross materialism which has been so characteristic of the dry evil in

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America. After establishing a theoretical kinship between amity and celery tonic he continues: "Then, too, much of the crude, maudlin gregariousness that comes after the third glass is a temporary, deceptive thing—fool's gold. You can't build anything on it."

The connotation conveyed in these brief remarks of Prof. Ross gives genuine cause for alarm. We seem to see the future American as a man who accepts the proffered sarsaparilla grudgingly and asks, "What is there in it for me?"

Is it really true, as Prof. Ross so cold-bloodedly suggests, that the dry habit may be expected to produce a civilization in which there will be no place for all things which glint a little and are gone? In such a state there will be no room for music. That too is an elusive commodity. Last notes do die away.

And we wonder whether Prof. Ross has ever stopped to consider how deceptive a thing a sunset may be. For a few fleeting minutes a sky will be splashed with gold, but just try to grab a handful of it and take it around to the bank and you'll find it isn't stuff upon which any substantial citizen can build.

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One of the things about Prohibitionists which frightens us most of all is their curious habit of wild and obscene muttering.

“Liquor,” says Prof. Ross, “has been the great enemy of the abstinent sex. No thoughtful woman finds anything captivating in a drinking song or takes ‘John Barleycorn’ as a joke. Usually deep potations let loose the satyr in man and put attractive women at the mercy of lust coupled with superior physical strength. The female vampire, of course, will lose one of her means of making infatuated males submit to her blood-sucking; but decent women, who have to trust their brains and character to command from the more muscular sex the respect to which they feel entitled, know that their moral and intellectual merits are never at a greater discount than in the eyes of intoxicated men.”

Mr. Ross ought not to take motion pictures so seriously.

“Those in whom the glass is wedded to good fellowship and good fellowship is wedded to the glass,” writes Prof. Ross, “will have trouble in finding new means of bridging the gulf that has resulted. Still,

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substitute thawers will be found, for nobody has ever pretended that, on the whole, abstainers are less sympathetic and brotherly, more self-centred and shut up within themselves, than drinkers."

If Prof. Ross can say that without blinking he has been favored by a most unusual run of luck in his contacts with Y. M. C. A. secretaries, Methodist ministers and dyspeptics.

"In Kansas a generation has grown up without recourse to liquor, and one hears more young people singing of an evening in a Kansas town than one hears in the lands of the vine."

Unfortunately, we have not been able to lay our hands on the volume which contains the per capita singing statistics for Kansas during the last generation. We are therefore in no position to argue the matter with a scientist. At the same time we wonder how many Kansans Prof. Ross can mention who belong in the first rank, or near it, in any of the arts. This, of course, is not intended as a blanket indictment against Kansans. Some of our best friends are Kansans. Life oughtn't to be all frivolity.

And they are loyal and generous friends. Nobody

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is ever more ready to share his troubles with you than a man from the Sunflower State. New York would hardly be the same without them. Certainly no well regulated feast can be conducted without bringing in the Kansan.

Even the opponents of the dry evil invariably preface their remarks by saying: “Of course, I don’t want the saloon back.” The Old Soak of Don Marquis is almost the only person now alive who has a good word for the vanished institution.

Many of its aspects were evil. That cannot be denied. We too must swell the chorus and say: “Of course, we don’t want the saloon back.” Yet, come to think of it, we should like something very much like it.

The need for a substitute is acute. Now that the saloon is gone there is practically nothing to take the edge off the home. The dry marauders have always based their gospel on the theory that if it were possible to legislate everybody into his home and keep him there, happiness would be achieved. We don’t believe it.

A home ought to be a place to which one may, upon occasion, return. In fact, no one should even attempt a home unless he is able to take it or let

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it alone. In the old days there was a certain warmth and graciousness about going home. It represented a choice. A man came home because he wanted to. Even though he said nothing, his mere presence at any hour before midnight was eloquent testimony of love and devotion. It showed that he valued the simple comforts and the pleasant companionship of the family circle more than the splendors of the place around the corner.

Coming home gave him a glow of righteousness. One could almost hear his ego purr. Whatever his shortcomings and failures in life, he could buoy himself up with the thought that he was not running last. He had been able to distance the devil.

This state of affairs is reported accurately enough by Edward Alsworth Ross in that portion of "The Social Trend" which he has devoted to a defense of Prohibition. Writing of the growth of the saloon in America, he says:

"Thereupon began a silent but determined duel between the American wife seeking to retain the companionship of her mate and have his co-operation in rearing their children, and the keeper of the male resort on the lookout for profitable patrons. The

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wife lured her husband, and later her sons, with the comforts and charms of home—rugs and curtains, the easy chair, the trimmed lamp, games, books, music and the society of good women.

“The saloonkeeper lured with bright lights, the shining bar, the brass rail, glistening glass, huge mirrors, sensual paintings, privacy for ‘a quiet game,’ and (sometimes) the society of loose women. The duel went on with varying fortunes. . . .”

Here and there the sketch of conditions offered by the professor needs a little retouching. We doubt if very many patrons went to the saloon just to look at the pictures. Nor can we quite accept “privacy for a ‘quiet game.’” If Prof. Ross were to be cross-questioned closely enough we believe he could be made to confess that he never played cards in a saloon.

Privacy indeed! There were always fifteen kibitzers for every actual player. Moreover, Prof. Ross does well to quote “quiet.” Poker remained a genial, carefree game while it was in the saloon. Now that it has been driven into the home, people play just for profit and invariably drop with small

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pairs. But this is another problem and perhaps a lesser one.

With the few exceptions noted, Prof. Ross is justified in his conception of conditions under the old regime. It was a duel between the home and the saloon. But curiously enough, Prof. Ross seems utterly blind to the idyllic quality of this arrangement. He does not seem to realize that competition is the life of a good many more things than trade.

"Now happily," he writes, "Prohibition comes to the assistance of this much-enduring woman and opens to her the means to build a home which will give her and her daughters an opportunity to exert a refining influence upon the coarser natures of her menfolk."

This may be good sociology but it is certainly bad sportsmanship. We find the professor rejoicing because a rousing, even-money duel has degenerated into a fixed fight. Certainly Ross pays no very high compliment to "good women" and "games" when he suggests that they could hardly have prevailed without the benefit of an act of Congress.

And there is a larger implication in the argument of Ross. He has pictured the enrichment of the home with "rugs and curtains, the easy chair, the

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trimmed lamp" and the rest as definitely part of a campaign to counteract the lure of "glistening glass," "huge mirrors" and "loose women."

Is it not fair to assume that the day the Volstead act went into effect the startled home-maker returned to find his wife in the act of taking down the curtains and returning the rugs.

"What's this?" he asks.

"I don't need 'em any more," replies his wife.

Not all the aspects of this are tragic. It may be that once the protection of Prohibition was conferred upon her, the American wife also got rid of the "good women."

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By the time my fellow reporters begin to call me "Pop" I want to be out of the city room. Few men grow old gracefully in journalism. There is no business in which their opinions meet such kindly impatience.

Of course if I could stick it out thirty-six years more, I might be the guest of honor at a dinner, and the staff would give me a gold watch and perhaps the owners of the paper would add a farm in New Jersey and a team of mules. And all that would indicate that it was time for me to step out and make room for the bright young fellow eager and ready to take my job. He could do it better. Newspapers need a fresh point of view. And thirty-six years from now the managing editor would be quite justified in fretting a little at my constant habit of

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saying that the theatre had declined lamentably from the good old days, and nagging readers with the complaint that they just should have been around in the golden age when John Barrymore played Hamlet, and Jane Cowl was Juliet.

Now, I don't want that gold watch, or the farm, or the team of mules. And I don't want to be an old man with memories, entirely surrounded by active and eager young men much too busy with their own affairs to pay any attention to my reminiscences about the way things used to be done in the old shop. I still have time to make my getaway. A safe percentage of readers set me down as a flip young fellow who will attain more wisdom with maturity; but to-day I found six gray hairs, and last week a columnist in Ohio called me a "journalist." Dignity will knock at the door presently, and it is already necessary that I should begin to prepare my retreat.

How, is much harder. To my mind, the notion that newspaper work is excellent training for other vocations is fallacious. After fourteen years as reporter, copy reader, rewrite man, sporting editor, dramatic critic, and columnist I am not fitted to earn my living by any means except writing. The oppor-

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tunities for such a livelihood are varied enough, but newspaper writing is highly specialized, and I am not at all sure that I can do any other kind successfully. To be sure, I have already done some work for magazines, but I don't do it well. When I sit down to review a play or report a baseball game there isn't much sense of strain. I just rattle it off. Naturally, I hope it will be a good story; but if it turns out poor or indifferent, there will be no great cause for worry. After all, this is just Friday's job, and Saturday is another day and a new job; and everybody, myself included, will have forgotten all about Friday. A magazine assignment is something else again. When I have a chance to do something in January which won't be published until June, the feeling that I am writing for posterity enters in. "Gosh!" I say to myself, "this has to be a lot better than usual." And as a result I tighten up like a green golfer playing in front of a gallery. Adjectives and all sorts of lugs creep in, and the thing doesn't turn out right.

Worst of all, my fearfulness of facing the world and making a living as a free lance goes much deeper than the terror of writing badly. That would not necessarily preclude publication. The nightmare

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which afflicts me is the thought that perhaps I would not be able to write at all. Freedom is ticklish business for people who are not used to it. Very probably I have thought of newspaper work from time to time as a grind. The pressure is sometimes terrific, but let that pressure be removed and this particular slave might float away as aimlessly as a Fourth of July balloon. Acquaintances sometimes remark, "I don't see how you get so much work done. You must have unusual energy." At such times I grin, with the realization that they do not know me very well, because, as a matter of fact, I am one of the laziest men in the world. I get through a lot of newspaper work in the course of a year, and I do it because I have to. My contract calls for it, and my boss is a man of great personal force. Conforming to the requirements is by far the easiest way. Will power and energy on my part would be indicated if I should stay away from the office some afternoon, and reply to all remonstrances: "I've decided not to work to-day. Good-by." But once out of the newspaper game the only authority to impel me to write would be myself, and there, at least, is one person whom I am not afraid to bully shamefully.

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By this time probably I have succeeded in conveying the suggestion that I do not enjoy writing. There is, of course, no distinction in this. I know one novelist, a woman, who maintains that she takes a keen delight in fashioning a story. Her last book was four hundred thousand words in length before she began to cut it, and so I believe she reports her emotions accurately. But this is decidedly exceptional. Most men who live by the typewriter hate the mechanics of their job. Of all the arts it is the most arduous.

Actors, painters, sculptors are far more fortunate, particularly the sculptors. I have known many who could slosh around with their clay through a twelve-hour day in complete contentment. They have a twofold satisfaction: sculpture caters to the artisan and the artist at the same time. It affords the same sort of joy that gardening does or mending furniture, and also the more subtle exhilaration of watching a dream take shape and work out. The sculptor can take pride simultaneously in the prowess of his fingers and of his mind. The pleasures of writing are all subtle and easily overborne. There is no satisfaction in hitting the correct keys on a typewriter, if one happens to compose in that manner, and cer-

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tainly the long-hand man is not going to be suffused with a continuous glow over the fact that he is able to form at will any letter in the alphabet.

Perhaps, in the interests of strict accuracy, I should modify these observations. Gardening and mending furniture are just thrown in as symbols. I would much rather write than do either of these things; but still vast numbers of persons seem to take pleasure in such activities. Again, it is not quite fair to say that there is no satisfaction whatsoever in the mechanics of composing on a typewriter. I have had a thrill out of it upon occasion. If I happen to be up against a story late at night, and the newspaper office is comparatively quiet, there is a joy in attacking a favorite machine with both hands and tearing into it. And as it roars and wheezes under your touch copy boys dash by and take away a sheet at a time.

And perhaps you know that you have only ten minutes more to make the edition. It becomes necessary to raise the beat. The old typewriter responds. Back and shoulders go into every adjective, but of course there isn't time to use many such words. The pace demands short and simple words which you know how to spell. It isn't well to stop

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and rationalize about the crisis through which you are passing. Sober thought might prompt the realization that failure to catch the edition will be less than a national calamity. A few readers in Greenwich, Connecticut, and points west, will miss this particular story. That's all.

However, it is easy to take the ordeal emotionally, and that is my custom. Time grows shorter. I begin to use whip and spurs on the machine, and under the lash it bounds ahead. "Probably," I say to myself, "there isn't another newspaper man in New York who could dash out this story so fast." There is no truth in the observation, but I believe it at the time and it comforts me. By this time there are three copy boys engaged in carrying the sheets to the night desk. Some man over in that direction is roaring, but it is hard to hear him because of the loud breathing of the typewriter and the singing of the wind in the face of machine and writer as we swing into the home stretch. A final chord! Back and shoulders, soul, hope of salvation and a comfortable old age, all go into that last vicious crash. The mainspring of the machine splits in two as you slide across the line. The man says that you have made the edition. Presently the

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building begins to heave a little as the presses start. The reading public of Greenwich, Connecticut, and points west, is saved. You borrow a cigarette, lean back and light it. Oh, yes, there is fun in writing, sometimes.

And of course I never denied that there are unique pleasures to be derived from writing, although not directly attendant upon it. Thus, there is nothing quite so enjoyable as reading your own stuff in type half an hour after you have finished it. Practically all the commas will be omitted, two of the best lines will be inverted, and your pun about "the chintz of the fathers" will appear simply as "the sins of the fathers." Still, this story will seem your authentic offspring. It will be more nearly recognizable as you than anything you may write in later years for the magazines or the leisurely publishers of books. It is within my plan and distant hope to become a great novelist some day (well, anyway, a good one), but even if I dream true no book served up with a lapse of two months between composition and publication can possibly give me the same satisfaction as the story I wrote about how Bobby Meusel stole home in the World's Series of 1921. That was turned in at nine o'clock, and

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two hours later I read it and found it fine. If I had been compelled to wait as much as a week, there would not have been the slightest pride in authorship.

I don't believe that anybody can be a good newspaper man without having a considerable capacity for getting excited about things. To this extent I am qualified. For fourteen years it has been possible to become all worked up about baseball, the Moscow Art Theatre, the Harvard football team, sometimes Shakespeare, and occasionally a new novel. Indeed, my only claim to consideration as a baseball writer or a dramatic critic is the ability to turn handsprings. I belong to the "attaboy" school of criticism.

At thirty-five I realized that my flair for acrobatics must inevitably wane, and that is one of the reasons why it is necessary to make plans for a retirement to previously prepared positions. In these, many of the things which helped me in newspaper work will be harmful. Unless maturity brings about a complete change of viewpoint, I am never going to outgrow a childish pride in doing things fast. I have written so far one novel, called "The Boy Grew Older," and I like it. Indeed, I like it best for the

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very thing which the critics have pounced upon. Instead of cringing when anybody says, "The book is obviously a hasty job," I am enormously pleased to be reminded that I wrote the entire fifty-five thousand words in five weeks. Until the reviews began to come in with their complaints about the mad haste of the book, I was ashamed at the manner in which I had dawdled. Before tackling the job I figured out that three newspaper columns a day ought to be easy work for an earnest young man on a vacation, and a newspaper column is approximately one thousand words.

According to my schedule, I should have had a ninety-thousand-word novel done at the end of the month. The experience taught me that it is impossible to capture the same frenzy in fiction as in news-writing. Nobody in Greenwich, or elsewhere, was waiting for this book, as they might be supposed to wait for the first edition of a great metropolitan daily. Copy boys did not drag it away from me a sheet at a time. The house failed to heave with the throb of presses when the last phrase was set down. In other words writing a novel was not exciting.

After the novel was out, the publisher said to

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me, "On the whole, I'm pleased with what you've done. Of course it's much too careless; but you can take a lot more pains when you do your next one for me. After you get the next one finished, it would be a good stunt to put it in the ice box for six months, and then take it out and rewrite it." My ambition to be a good novelist waned at that moment. It horrified me to think of touching the cold corpse of a piece of writing which had been laid away for six months. And this repugnance to the career of my dream was heightened a month later, when I happened to be down at Atlantic City with a novelist of high ability who was working on a book. We met at lunch, and I asked, "What kind of a morning did you have?"

"Great," he said. "I got up at seven o'clock and worked steadily till twelve. I finished almost a thousand words."

It seemed to me a little effeminate for a grown man to boast of such ignoble puttering. Of course I knew that Flaubert used to lock himself in a room for a fortnight and emerge at the end of that time with two hundred words all set down in lasting and perfect sequence beyond the need of any possible revision. But then, he insisted that in his prose

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the same word should not occur twice on any single page. Probably he made an exception for "the's" and "a's," but concerning all others he was inflexible.

With greater satisfaction I remembered the heresy of George Burdick, night city editor. He was sitting up waiting for an important news story, and the reporter assigned to the job had suddenly become style-conscious. Again and again the reporter wrote the first line of a lead, and each time tore it up. It didn't have just the tang and sparkle which he desired. Burdick endured the strain of waiting as long as he could, and then tiptoed across the room and tapped the man on the shoulder. "Mr. Curtin," he said, "if you please, just one little word after another." To that heresy I cling. To that fraternity I belong.

But I am thirty-five, and already there comes dimly to the ear the ticking of the gold watch which is due every man who has been fifty years in the newspaper business. Getting out of it may contribute nothing to fun, but the good of the soul is also to be considered. There are things in my newspaper job which do violence to human dignity. I am employed on the "Morning World" of New

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York City to write dramatic criticism, conduct a column of book reviews and general comment, which is printed under the heading "It Seems To Me," and report the more important sporting events and occasionally other news stories of general interest. That means that upon five days a week I must go to the office and write my impressions and opinions of something.

Naturally, there are a good many days when I am bereft of both; but it is necessary to write, just the same. Again, the play which I see may arouse no desire in me to make any comment whatsoever. At least half the plays which are produced suggest very little to a critic. They are not very good and they are not very bad, and the easy and natural thing to write would be, "A play called 'Miss Smithers' was produced last night at the Main Street Theatre. It has three acts and the performance lasted until about eleven o'clock." Such a review would be too short and too neutral, and so the critic has to rack his brains to discover something or other in "Miss Smithers" which arouses his enthusiasm or his antagonism. Accordingly, his character becomes just a little warped. He develops into the sort of person who takes sides on everything. He cannot even

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look at the weather without declaring himself for or against it.

Most trying of all is the fact that the dramatic critic is compelled by his job to write about acting, an art for which almost no words are provided. With the exception of Charles Lamb, almost nobody has ever written about acting in such a way as to make anyone not present at a performance have any adequate picture of what went on.

One must be a wing shot to bring down an actor for the reading public. This vital force which was seen upon the stage is dissipated into adjectives when it is described. I know, without too much effort, whether or not I have liked a piece of acting. In the course of seven or eight years of dramatic reviewing, I have called actors and actresses superb, magnificent, enthralling, intriguing, thrilling, admirable, exciting, vibrant, astounding, gorgeous, glorious and good. But in every case I have really said nothing more than, "I like this performance." And in the same manner, the much longer string of unfavorable adjectives which have appeared in the works of the same reviewer mean nothing more than, "I don't like this performance." During all these years I have been trying desperately to say

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why I liked a piece of acting or why I disliked it, and in that time I have not succeeded once to my own satisfaction.

How can anybody do it? The art of acting is almost entirely intuitive. The actor may be a person of profound intellect, but he need not be. One of the greatest performances I ever saw was given by a man who is just a shade more than half-witted. It is rather exacting to expect the critic to tell why an actor is good or bad, when the performer himself has only the vaguest notion of how he gets his effects.

Even if I should restrict myself to such simple declaratives in theatrical criticism as "I liked Jane Roe and I disliked John Doe," there would still be difficulties in the job. By now I know a large number of actors and actresses. Some of these friendships I value highly, but they are precarious. Almost without exception there comes a time when I see each of these friends in some play in which I don't like him at all. That observation is duly set down. For this frankness I make no claim of virtue. The practice of speaking ill of our friends is much easier than is generally supposed. But it is hard to endure the fact that the person criticized

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takes the comment as a personal affront. Once upon a time I believed this sensitiveness was the worst sort of sportmanship. Perhaps it is, but I sympathize and understand the feeling of resentment. Until my novel came out, I had always been the person doing the criticizing, and never the quarry of the reviewer. One of my best newspaper friends read my book and wrote that it was entirely lacking in interest. No public brawl resulted, but for a week I just loathed that man. I lay awake at night and pondered and pondered. It was impossible for me to make up my mind whether he was crooked or just stupid.

In addition to knowing actors, I know novelists, and there again one runs into the ungrateful business of being compelled to hurt people's feelings, which is no fun at all if you have to see them shortly afterward. The obligation of oral criticism is universal, but here one may wriggle out much more readily. I remember how glad I was, a year or so ago, to be temporarily out of the business of play reviewing, for in this period one of the worst plays I ever saw was produced by one of my best friends. I did go to the first night and I did run squarely into the producer in the theater lobby after the

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performance: He looked at me inquiringly, and I said, "Good evening," which was the only opinion he ever heard from me about his production.

Unless I can get out of the newspaper business within a reasonable term of years my hope of a comfortable old age will go glimmering. This has nothing to do with the financial aspects of the matter, for probably free lancing might be far less profitable. The average novel sells five thousand copies or less, which nets the author one thousand dollars. It does not seem as if fortune lies in that direction. My mind is on things more spiritual.

The backbone of a comfortable old age must be some eager interest. One may look forward with pleasure to the days when he can slump before his fireside and read a good book, or go to the matinée or the ball game. Consider my plight: It will require years for me to disassociate my mind from the thought that a good book is something I have to review for the Sunday paper. Even in the time of retirement a play will cause an uneasy sensation that I really must find just the adjective suitable for the performance of the leading lady. And a baseball game will be marred by the memory of the

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many times I had to score the proceedings, and check up on the assists and putouts.

Still, I have my dream. There is a fireside in it and a bench with a leather cushion. I see myself sitting on it, and into the room there comes a brisk and handsome lad of, say, about twenty-one or two. "Grandpa," he says, "what do you think of this new novel?"

First I glare at him, and then I reply firmly, but not unkindly, "Think! Think! Why, bless you, my boy, I haven't done that for years. I gave that all up when I left the newspaper business and began to write books."

IT SEEMS TO ME

MR. SUMNER is exercised over the fact that he has seen young people spooning in motion picture theatres when vivid scenes of love-making were being shown on the screen. It seems to me that Mr. Sumner has a right to be concerned about this. Where is the Republic heading when young folk need the pacemaking of counterfeited ardor in order to be moved to love-making?

Young people ought to make love much more casually than that. But mostly they are timid hereabouts. New York is freer than other towns. Many of the immigrant boys and girls take small shame to have the passing hundreds see them kiss. The Italians, in particular, are vastly unconcerned with the presence of unbidden audiences. They know that God sees, and what difference can it possibly make if there happen to be a few others?

I have always fancied that Romeo realized that

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he and Juliet were not quite alone in that garden. And the fact that his voice drifted out over the garden wall to a multitude stimulated him. It made his love more articulate and more eloquent. He knew that he was not just a lover but all lovers. He said about the same things which everybody says at such times, but he said them well. And in so doing he dignified the whole business of love-making and made it seem worth while and important.

I wish that this much of the Shakespearean tradition persisted in the theatre. I have grown a little weary of the young juvenile who must stammer twice, choke a little, and dig one toe in the carpet before he can say even a plain, unadorned "I love you."

And yet, he endures in the theatre as an appealing figure. Audiences laugh and applaud at his discomfort. All of which goes to prove that by our national standards we have imposed the belief that love-making is just a little discreditable and that honest and decent folk are apt to make a botch of it.

I hope Mr. Sumner will agree with me that this is a wretched idea. If love-making is worth doing at

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all it is worth doing well. Isn't that so, Mr. Sumner?

The curse which fell upon Eve when she ate the apple was that she began to see things adjectively. Up to that time she and Adam had lived simply, with animals and trees and mountains and sunsets. Of course, they discriminated between them. Likes and dislikes are much older than adjectives. Eve used to say "I like the lion and I hate the hyena."

Adam was willing to let it go at that. Explanations were still practically unknown. They came in with the adjectives. In those glorious days there was no such thing as criticism. Eve looked at the sunset and said, "Golly!"

"Here too," replied Adam.

And then she ate the apple.

For the space of two minutes and a half a deep silence brooded over the face of the earth. Perhaps there was just the suggestion of a hissing whisper from the Serpent. Some commentators believe that he said, "Let there be adjectives."

Unlike man and woman, these newly created things came not from the mud but out of thin air. The sun shone and yet there was a sound like fall-

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ing hail. The adjectives were coming to earth, and as the heavier ones hit the meadows of Eden, they made a distinct squashing sound. The Garden was filled with "plop! plop! plop!"

"It's a nice sunset," said Eve.

Curiously enough, the first adjective born into the world was thus misused thirty-five seconds after its creation.

"Lovely," said Adam.

"Heavenly," said Eve.

"Adequate," remarked Adam, and the Recording Angel made a note upon the margin of his ledger, "Remember to arrange for the birth of a few dramatic critics.

As an afterthought he added, "There is no hurry about this. The next æon will do."

"How fortunate we are here in our snug little Garden looking at this glorious sunset," said Eve. "You know they say it never sets on the British Empire."

"Pro-British," interjected Adam.

In another corner of the Garden an amoeba shuddered and set out upon the long and difficult process of evolution. To all practical purposes John F. Hyland had been born.

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"But what appeals to me most," continued Eve, "is that whatever else may be said about our life here it is romantic."

The hyena laughed and the lion roared. Both left the Garden as fast as their legs would carry them. They knew that Eden was doomed. As the adjectives came into the Garden, peace and quiet flew out of the window. By some instinct, perhaps divine, the animals knew that Adam could not fail to hit upon "realistic" once he had heard Eve's "romantic." It might be a minute and it might be a year, but they were willing to take no chances. The knowledge of good and evil now had the unfortunate man and woman in its clutches. "I know what I like," was as dead as Abel. God created man and woman, but the Devil created criticism. The curse had come.

Thomas Beer, who wrote "Stephen Crane," a most masterly biography, has followed it with a novel called "Sandoval." It is a book of much brilliance, but to me it is not wholly effective.

In "Sandoval" Beer deals with New York of the eighteen seventies. There is again, as in the Crane

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book, a wizardry for backgrounds bravely and quickly sketched. In a paragraph or so this writer can give you the mood of a room, the color of a dancing girl's skirt as it swirls through the path of a spotlight, the pulse of a place where people are dining and drinking.

But Mr. Beer's relation to the novel is not unlike the relation of Robert Edmond Jones to the theatre. The characters whom he creates are fashioned to fit the setting. They are less than the backgrounds against which they move. It is not permitted to them ever to sweep aside all tangible stage properties and struggle fiercely in the ether of violent emotion. For I hold that in the stress of strong feeling, walls, street and sky should somehow recede out of a tale and leave the people concerned, a vast uncharted void in which to clash and turn.

In "Sandoval" not one is free to lash out mightily, for painted drops are all about and each character must break his heart within a well defined space, like a motion picture actor in thrall to the fixed eye of the camera.

Sandoval dies in a fall from the balcony of a rowdy hotel. The boy who tells the story relates: "I looked down at a white shapelessness doubled

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beside a chair where the damp soil glittered gently in the light from the lower door."

So it is in this book that even when one dies he must remember to do it gracefully and not evade his responsibility to create an arresting picture.

Beer writes prodigiously well—a little too well in "Sandoval." He indulges in fireworks and flip-flops. And there are no misses. That is a pity. Because, after all, narrative is generally best when told in a certain rush by a writer who has much to say and who is a little afraid that if he dallies at any point his story may escape him. I think that on the whole the modern novel says too little and we are seduced often into cheers and acceptance because it says that little so well.

On Friday night I sat next to Will Beebe at a dinner and remarked more or less idly, "I wish you'd show me around the Bronx Zoo some time."

"All right," said Beebe. "How about 9.30 tomorrow morning?"

Of course I couldn't dodge then, but the trip turned out all right even if it did force me to get up at dawn or thereabouts. I found that I had never been properly introduced to the animals be-

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fore. Many of them were friends of Beebe. Several had been captured by him on his last trip to South America, a few months ago.

For instance, my favorite in all the Zoo, a two-toed sloth, was part of the Beebe booty. The sloth did not indicate in any way that he recognized the man who had introduced him to civilization, but after much persuasion he was induced to fly into a violent rage and move a little very slowly. I'd give almost anything for such a temperament. When I referred to myself as "slothful" the other day it was mere boasting. The quality which I possess is only the vaguest approximation of the real thing. As I gazed at the charming animal I was minded to prostrate myself and cry, "Master!"

The sloth, according to Beebe, never allows himself to get excited about anything. He told me that once he saw two sloths fighting. One of them became so terrifically energized that he finally aimed a blow at his adversary. It was like slow motion pictures, or the Rath Brothers. So deliberate was the roundhouse swing that the patience of the sloth at which it was aimed became exhausted after a

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while. He moved away majestically, but the animal which had decided to hit was much too indolent to change its mind and went through with the blow, even though nothing was included in the range of the lazy arc but empty air.

The maternal instinct exists dimly. If you take a young sloth away from its mother, Beebe says, she may wait about for a minute or so if her offspring happens to be in sight. But if the young sloth is concealed the mother will forget all about it in a few seconds and amble away with a slightly pre-occupied air, as one who might say, "I've got a sneaking notion that I've mislaid something. Never mind, I'll remember it presently." But the fortunate sloth never does.

Indeed, I was so much impressed with the charming social qualities of the sloth that I have considered inserting an advertisement in some good medium among the morning papers: "For exchange—one managing editor for two-toed sloth. Will consider three-toed."

I wish I had taken a course in end-to-endology. Better still, I would like to be one of the men employed to do the laying. If laid end to end the loaves

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of baked bread in the United States in the year 1911 (we forget the source of these statistics) would stretch from Columbus Circle to the foot of the Great Wall of China. The work of a layer must unquestionably be hard, but he does get about and see the world. Perhaps, he doesn't. It may be that men who have been in the business for years go about their jobs never once straightening up to look at the wonders of God or man in the far places, but keep their attention riveted wholly on the task of seeing that each unit is flush with the one in front and behind.

Once there was a man engaged in laying a well known brand of Virginia cigarettes from the front door of the factory in East 37th Street to the foot of the Pyramid of Cheops. It was the design of his employers to prove to the public that more packages of their particular cigarette were sold on the Atlantic seaboard in any given month than any or all the Turkish and Egyptian makes combined.

The Egyptians, hearing of this mission, endeavored to seduce the layer from his task. In the outskirts of Biskra, in the moonlight (the layer was his own night shift), the most beautiful of all the dancing girls was employed to divert him. She

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played soft music and sang and then she openly called and beckoned to the young man (he had just turned twenty when he began his task at the front door of the factory).

To all this he paid no attention. At last she approached the young man mincingly, and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"I love you," she said in her soft and broken English, which I shall not attempt to reproduce. "Speak to me," she cooed.

And then for the first time since his journey began the young layer straightened up from his end-to-end task and for the first time he spoke. He said, "Eight million one hundred and twenty-three, eight million one hundred and twenty-four, eight million one hundred and twenty-five."

To-day the portrait of that young man hangs in the main dining room of the Layers' Club. There are six dining rooms in all and they are laid end to end. Unfortunately, the name of the man has escaped me.

I have always been a little dubious as to the familiar theory about the artist and a life of sin. If

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one were an artist it would, of course, be a convenient theory. Generally speaking, it is probably good for the man of high talent to be fairly foot-loose from inhibitions. With certain nice reservations, it is probably to his advantage, and to the advantage of the world in the long run, that he should seek to find in life the things he wants. But, for that matter, the same rule holds good for other individuals who are not artists.

The flaw in the theory of looseness for art's sake is that immorality is responsible for almost as many catchwords and false traditions as virtue itself. Only very fine spirits have ever been able to sin without self-consciousness and a sense of obligation. Eighty-three per cent. of all dissipation is undertaken not so much from any honest longing as from a feeling that it is the thing to do.

The reservoir in Central Park could be filled to overflowing with cocktails which were imbibed by persons who didn't really want them at all, but feared that a refusal would seem a little churlish. There are sharp claws in the velvet of gallantry. The emancipated male has precious little freedom. Indeed, he confesses as much by adopting the descriptive phrase "a regular fellow."

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Without doubt, Joseph of the Bible is the most maligned character in all history. He fled from an entanglement for the sufficient and excellent reason that it was not to his liking, and for centuries since his name has been held up to scorn. To say of a man that he is a Joseph is to call him prude and prig. To this extent, at least, I believe in the single standard of morality. The world holds that the conduct of a woman is admirable when she refuses the advances of a man. That same world sniggers contemptuously when it hears of any man who has refused the advances of a woman. There is no sense in that.

And so, if I were an artist, I would not pay much attention to the theory of the development of genius by promenades along the primrose path. Certainly I would not walk there through any sense of duty. It does not seem to me that the artist in search of educational experiences presents a very attractive figure. No matter what he says, his words must convey the thought, "Please fly with me and be my love, because I am planning a new novel and it must be animated by fire and passion." I should hardly

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think any woman would regard it as an endearing proposal.

A great man dies deeply. His spirit does not walk through the land where he lived, for soon the path is blotted out by a shadow. Even as the earth is turned a legend is loosed.

At first this legend may be very like, but soon it waxes into something taller and more monstrous, bigger than the man himself in all save thickness. And there is nothing left of the texture of this one who was a human being. The man sparkled when the sunlight was on him and winds ruffled him. God compounded him of good and evil and gave him wit and folly. Memory recreates him into a silhouette, smooth of surface as the pages of school-book history. In the magnification the shears have gone awry here and there and false contours billow from the outline.

The disaster in Japan has set a thousand editorial writers musing in the mightiness of nature and the puniness of man. But it seems to us that another reading of the event is not only possible but inevitable. We think that here we have more testimony

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of tenacity than ever before. Hundreds of thousands are dead in Tokio, but millions live. Across that plain which lies above a fire stream the earthquakes roll like sluggish waves. Each year a thousand or more have tugged at the tops of Tokio. When bamboo quivers there it is not the wind.

So it has gone on for centuries. This is the mightiest yet of all recorded assaults, and man remains. In a thousand years nature has not been able to shake him off. Though the ground has rocked and swayed beneath him like a bronco, the little Japanese sits tight. And across the world from fellow man there should come a mighty and defiant shout—"Ride him, cowboy!"

Within a year the tea houses will stand in the streets where the dead lie. Geishas will sing again of Johnkeen, or however his name is spelled. "Yokohama, Nagasaki, Kobe, maru hoi!"

Who says that man is puny? He falls and sleeps and dies awhile and then he is up again. Perhaps it is not the same man, but the ranks do fill. After the wave and the hurricane and the earthquake, life crawls from under the debris. What permanent victory has nature ever won from us? Neither ice

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nor fires nor floods have checked the succession of human kind. Other species have given up the fight, but man is the finest animal of the lot. The sun cannot drive him from the tropics and he sets down his foot beyond the arctic in barren lands where even the microbe cannot live.

To be sure, our perch upon the earth is precarious. Only the crust has been won. Flame and water menace us from beneath, and above are mighty bodies capable of flipping the whole globe into the dust bin. But they haven't done it yet. Nature outweighs us and nature has the punch. Man has staggered and bled and reeled from the hammer blows. He hasn't gone down. Until the final ten has been counted, who dares to say that he is puny?

People who amount to much invariably stop just a little short of perfection in order to give the crowd a chance to catch up. And then they never do complete the journey.

You see, perfection is a pretty dull dwelling. There can't be any of the excitement of variation in a perfect performance. Certainly nobody would like to see it twice. When a man or a horse rises for

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an obstacle the thrill comes in seeing him brush against it before he clears.

There has been dissonance in every song or book or play which has thrilled me. And it has been purposeful. Medusa might have saved her head if only she had scaled down the perfection of her terrors within the limitations of poor Perseus. Wiser geniuses abate just an atom from their mightiest magnificence. Nor is this wholly unselfish. Perhaps they fear to go beyond the last rim alone. Being a god is dreary business for one who has known mortality.

And so the great and volatile carry with them clownishness in order to grapple hold of earth when the need comes. De Pachmann and his piano might quite possibly float straight through the ceiling if the little man did not occasionally interrupt Chopin with a most vulgar and comic catarrh. Chaliapin, grown twelve feet tall, sings of the voice of Death and promptly dwindles for his next number into a Government clerk with a hiccough. Chaplin smiles his crooked smile and proceeds to kick a fat man.

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Babe Ruth hits a foul far over the right field grand stand and then strikes out.

If de Pachmann's method of combining pantomime, reminiscence, spoken thought with piano music is wholly unsuitable to the conditions under which big concerts are held, then the artistic flaw is less in him than in the conditions. It is the 3,000 who are out of step. There is something essentially gross and unwieldy in the effort to make a piano serve 3,000 at the same time. Music at its finest must be far more intimate. Of course, it may be said that de Pachmann, having accepted and even courted the conditions, should live up to the rules. We suppose he is in nowise horrified or displeased at the vast rewards of great and crowded concerts. But there is something instinctive in him which rebels against the conditions for all that. He makes an effort to draw the thousands closer. Even the Pied Piper himself, the most seductive musician recorded in history, probably gestured now and again and cried out to some single child in the crowd.

"Bravo, Pachmann!" says Pachmann upon occasion when he feels that he is playing superbly. And

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why not? It would be a poor musician who did not appreciate great music magnificently rendered. And then to a certain extent the de Pachmann who says "Bravo!" is not precisely the same man who fingers the keys. The little man with the short arms seems to enter into the instrument itself almost to a physical extent.

Anybody who does his best is apt to feel admiration for himself. If I ever write anything great I will not only be surprised but exceedingly enthusiastic about Heywood Broun. But I will feel a little alien. That is the fine and unusual adjustment in de Pachmann. He is on speaking terms and even intimacy with de Pachmann at his greatest moments.

Roland Hayes sang of Jesus and it seemed to me that this was what religion ought to be. It was a mood instead of a creed, an emotion rather than a doctrine. There was nothing to define and nothing to argue about. Each person took what he liked and felt whatever he had to feel and so there was no heresy. And as for miracles, music itself is a miracle.

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For that matter, I saw a miracle in Town Hall. Half of the people who heard Hayes were black and half were white and while the mood of the song held they were all the same. They shared together the close silence. One emotion wrapped them. And at the end it was a single sob.

"He never said a mumbling word," sang Hayes and we knew that he spoke of Christ, whose voice was clear enough to cross all the seas of water and of blood.

MY SORT OF GOD

I WISH I could write it down. Of course I can't. To define God is to limit Him. Still it seems inevitable that man should do that in order to get some edge to which his mind may cling. All religion is concerned with this process of scaling down God into the realm of finite comprehension.

And so, although the various churches insist that the God confined in their own particular dogma is a Deity of absolute perfection, it seems to me that in every case there has been a minification. Perfection itself is a conception quite a bit beyond the range of mortal mind.

Orthodoxy has burdened Jehovah with human attributes. Anger and vengeance are attributed to Him because these are failings which we ourselves experience and can therefore understand.

And in the churches they also talk of God as all-powerful, but it does not seem to me that they quite

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mean that either. The conception of an all-powerful Deity has been decidedly qualified by the belief that His creature man got out of hand and could be saved from perdition only by the sacrifice of Christ, the son of God. An all-powerful God could have created Adam and Eve without sin and without the desire of sin. The existence of such a place as hell would be an indication of the fallibility of God. If souls were really lost it would be hard to acquit God of mislaying them.

But most of all I quarrel with the fundamentalist who insists that he "loves God." I don't believe him for a minute. Into love there must enter some slight solace of equality. Adoration and love I hold to be imperfect synonyms. No human being could possibly be at ease with the God of the dogmas. He could pray to such a God, but he could not explain, or argue, or have a joke. Fear tarnishes love. I could not love a God who held one hand behind his back and in that hand had hell. But, naturally, if I believed in such a God I would try very hard to feign love.

No, I do not think that man may ever expect to know God and to define him. But there is an extraordinary something which happens now and again

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in the human spirit. There comes to the soul a second wind. A man gets the chance to say to himself, and to say truthfully, "This thing I have done is magnificent. I didn't know I had it in me."

The achievement need not be anything so tangible as the creation of music or poetry. It might be something which made people laugh. It could be a tingle, a taste, a hope, the sight of leaves in a wind, a caress. But in this moment there would be gusto. And the man upon whom the spell came would be for his little time valuable and important.

Something marching catches him up. Ahead are the banners and the bugles and we are all marching, marching away. Away—that's enough for any one who feels the swing of it.

Oh, I can't define God, but I'm not an atheist.

Somebody may come along and say, "But you're not talking about God at all. You're talking about the will to live, or a good dinner, or a sunny day, or the sub-conscious."

I don't care what name is used because it really is God.

HEDDA

To one who has been drifting into the belief that only the fresh laid plays are good, "Hedda Gabler," as performed by the Equity Players yesterday afternoon was a revelation. In thirty-three years this play of Ibsen's has by no manner of means grown worn or quaint or irrelevant. Indeed it has grown in timeliness.

In this particular instance, the dramatist shot so far beyond the thought of his day that the play can hardly have been so clear and coherent in the first flush of its currency as it appeared yesterday at the 48th Street Theatre.

I can remember that even as recently as ten years ago commentators made a great to-do about the intention of the author. There was much complicated explanation about symbolism and a disposition to dodge other perplexing points by saying "The psychosis of pregnancy."

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But in all this talk one very striking symbol was overlooked. As far as I can remember, no critic called attention to the fact that Ibsen named his play after the wife of George Tesman and yet called her Hedda Gabler, as she was before marriage. To be sure, the Lucy Stone League had not yet been founded, but I doubt whether there was any accident in Ibsen's granting to his heroine the use of her own name. Hedda should be a heroine of the feminists, but they have passed her by entirely to canonize Nora, who went out into the night.

Quite obviously, Hedda fought the same fight, and if she has been allowed to go by unhonored (save as an excellent rôle) it is because the very violence of her methods has made her a somewhat inflammable companion to enter the peace of the martyrs. Hedda was a militant. I do not believe that Ibsen regarded her as queer, or at least he must have recognized that her queerness was of the sort which enters into the composition of all revolutionists.

As feminist forbears go, I think that Hedda was worth ten of Nora. After all, there was a good deal of shoving and pushing before Nora accomplished her momentous exit. She made no move until circumstances had first furnished pretty broad hints.

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Hedda's rampage was much more nearly her own idea. Nora knew at last that she was before all else a human being and, to preserve her status in that estate, she fled from all who would have degraded her. Hedda was more audacious. Instead of flight, she chose to knock down those who stood in her way, and then to trample over them.

And once theatregoers and play reviewers thought of Hedda as a woman almost mad! They called her morbid and neurotic because she bridled at the rôle assigned to her in the biological scheme of things. Her bitter comment upon marriage was set down as mild insanity and her blazing rebellion against woman's traditional obligation to act as a good influence upon the life of a man was regarded as a sort of demoniac possession.

But thousands of women to-day voice the notions of Hedda quite casually without even being thought advanced, let alone neurotic. And they do not find it necessary to proceed to any of the devilish lengths which Hedda adopted, because by now the community here and there gives way before them. The masculine world has learned to duck and sidestep the familiar fury which hell alone can hold.

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When I first read "Hedda Gabler," fifteen years ago, I thought of Hedda as a she-devil. I don't think that now. Not all her actions were admirable, but if Samson behaved heroically in pulling down a temple, Hedda should not be without honor for clawing to pieces as much of her own community as she could reach. For it was a community co-ordinated to hem her into conformity.

It was not a pretty piece of business for Miss Gabler to burn the priceless manuscript of Eilert Lovborg, but she had been sorely tried. It was necessary for her to listen to a good deal of talk about the manner in which he had been inspired by the ennobling influence of a good woman. She was being asked to witness, and even applaud a traditional piece of masculine chicanery.

Lovborg proposed to use this feminine good influence for all it was worth to him, but when the book came out the name on the title page and the honor and the glory would be his. The woman was supposed to derive full and sufficient satisfaction from the fact that she, in her small way, had been allowed to do her bit.

Yes, the more I think about it the more recon-

HEDDA

ciled I am to Hedda's burning Loveborg's book. You may remember that it was to be a book dealing with the civilization of the future. It could hardly have been a treatise very courageous or farseeing.

Just three characters in the play have read the manuscript before it is consigned to the flames. George Tesman reports that it is a masterpiece, but he is a fussy pedant and his good opinion is a reproach rather than a recommendation. Mrs. Elvsted is also an enthusiast, but she, in addition to being a fool, is in love with Lovborg and so that critical opinion is at least compromised. The fact that Lovborg believes he has written a work of genius is also not important. Few authors are good self-critics and this one is an arrant sentimentalist who is disposed to have his fling and then find a convenient feminine shoulder upon which he may load his remorse.

It would have been much better for the world if Hedda had written a book. The next best thing has happened. In the play Ibsen has not neglected her point of view, and if it were possible to interview him in heaven I feel sure that he would confess that

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Hedda, far from being a nerve-ridden, wanton wretch, was among the most admirable and honest-minded of all the characters whom he brought into the world.

BACK FROM NOWHERE

The obituary notice, we hope, will read: "The body was found on the corner of Broadway and 42d Street." We purpose to make our address from now on New York, New York City.

The land has licked us. We can maintain our post on the frontier no longer, and the small log cabin at Westport, Conn., which we rented for the summer, has been abandoned.

Nature, we feel sure, will rush back and take possession of the little tract upon which we staked our claim. We tried to wrench a bit of wilderness to civilization, but at best we have only scarred it. Presently cows will trample the spot which was once the reception hall, and within a year the birds will nest in the best of the master's bedrooms.

If there had been screens in the windows we might have held out a little longer, but shortly after dawn yesterday we realized that the insect horde was on

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the march and that further resistance would be useless. On the whole, we accepted the reverse like a city dweller and a sportsman. With a simple but eloquent gesture, which included the house and grounds and all the outlying buildings, we remarked: "The flies seem to have it; the flies have it."

We are lucky to have escaped. Presently it might have been too late. The wilderness is insidious, and a man must be on his guard, or it will get him utterly. Born in Brooklyn and reared entirely below 125th Street, there would seem to be nothing in our environment to make us particularly susceptible to the call of the primitive. But who can abate the hereditary tendencies which lie within him? Old race memories linking us with the land remain. One drop of agricultural blood may be enough to account for a throw-back.

The beginning of retrogression often seems innocent enough. A little patch in a city back yard may be the first false step. So it was with us. We tried to raise radishes in 70th Street. Nothing ever came up, and the pastime seemed innocent enough, but by the following spring we were pricing houses in New Rochelle. The old jungle instinct had been aroused.

A year later we began to talk of buying a farm.

BACK FROM NOWHERE

If reason had not interposed to save us it is more than likely that we might have become another Mowgli, sitting around talking to Baa-Baa the sheep in his native idiom. Even now we regret just a little that those days will never be. It would have been fun to have observed the countenance of the managing editor when, in response to some kindly inquiry, we bared our fangs and bit him in the leg.

But as a matter of fact we have fallen so completely out of love with nature that we intend to spend a good deal of time from now on tramping over city pavements and crushing all stray blades of grass which may try to worm their way between the flagstones.

Devotion to our work proved to be the factor which saved us from the grip of the soil. It took us no more than two days to discover that it is impossible to write anything out in the great silences. And it wasn't so very silent either. There was a silly brook which roared by all night. There are restful lulls in the rhythm of the subway, and the Broadway surface cars run so infrequently that they give the ear no bother at all. The brook was on a rush schedule. It was going to the sea. Engaged on cosmic business, it could hardly be expected to be

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anything but indifferent to journalism. The mosquitoes, on the other hand, were not indifferent.

Miles away in the dark, dogs, or maybe they were wolves, barked and unmistakable cows bellowed. All the night noises of the wilderness are mournful. The thought of death became uppermost. We felt that we might die before finishing the column, and we wondered how long it would be before they found us.

By that time, of course, all the paragraphs would have been dated by the march of events. Only the brook would continue in the same old way, and we couldn't think up anything to say about the brook.

Perhaps our experience out on the edge of the world has helped to enlarge our horizons. We appreciate now better than ever before what the pioneers who made our country possible were compelled to endure. They had to wait from ten to fourteen hours to find out by what score the Yankees lost.

SHAW AND SHAKESPEARE

ALTHOUGH there has been no request, we are going to begin by reprinting what we said about Shaw's "Saint Joan" immediately after the first performance.

"In his play 'Saint Joan,' which was produced for the first time on any stage at the Garrick Theatre last night, Bernard Shaw brings a curtain down on that most trumpery of theatrical stencils, 'I wonder !' He has written an epilogue which is shockingly and painfully unnecessary. Several portions of the play are tedious. A little of it is cheap. There is a touch of the maudlin. And it is, in our judgment, the finest play written in the English language in our day."

Generally, after a debauch into superlatives we are headachey and remorseful the next day, but "Saint Joan" still looms even though we have had time to think about it. Of course, this is not the first

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time that Bernard Shaw has towered in a six-foot world, but here, more clearly than in any of his other plays, the genius of the man is evident, entirely aside from his cleverness.

It is because of this cleverness that Shaw is so often minified in the minds of the public and other critics. The world has warrant for not expecting to find cleverness and genius co-existing. And so, when Shaw twinkles, it is customary to say, "See there—the man is entertaining and amusing, but he is just a clown."

To be the greatest clown in modern literature would be, in itself, no insignificant post, but Shaw is a great deal more than that. And, after all, he has never entered into antics with his whole soul, for no emotionalist can be satisfied merely to play.

Perhaps the strangest misapprehension about Shaw is the common delusion that he is cold and aloof. Generally it is expressed in even shorter compass. When people say of any one that he is "an intellectual" they seem to feel that this carries with it, by necessity, the negation of all burning enthusiasm.

Now, as a matter of fact, learning is itself a flame. Knowledge comes to no man without an intense crav-

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ing. But the Shaw of "Saint Joan" is largely animated by an uncanny wisdom which is wider and deeper than knowledge. He has made long and perilous leaps to truths which cannot be gained by toil and concentration. If the theory arises centuries hence that certain portions of "Saint Joan" were handed down from a mountain top we should not care to be the modernist of the day assigned to debate the issue.

Unfortunately, inspired wisdom seems always to be mixed with a certain amount of folly. A genius is more and less than the accomplished practitioner for whom the word "artist" has been invented. An artist, as we conceive the word, is a person capable of self-criticism and self-discipline. There is the suggestion of polishing and refining and patching. From artists come things agreeable to look upon, pleasant to the ear, smooth to the touch. But genius is more tempestuous and uncouth. The passion of genius cannot be concerned with rough edges and blue pencils and ease and restraint. It is enough to carve into the face of a cliff. On such a task precision would hardly be a virtue.

And so, when a genius is done with his job, some

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lesser person, with sandpaper, should come after him. A little of "Saint Joan" is almost incredibly inept. The most insignificant person, so long as he had sense, could easily improve it. We ourself could better the play in a single afternoon. Using a blue pencil is no trick at all, unless a person happens to be a genius. For the genius cannot retrace his steps advantageously. He does not know just what journey he has made nor how. Even the nature of his impulse has been hidden from him. And it is the decree, that to him shall be denied the knowledge of good and evil.

It is a pity that nothing remains of any art produced in Eden before the fall. Some of it must have been magnificent and some ridiculous. When Adam and Eve ate the apple they placed upon the æsthetic aspirations of mankind certain limitations. Any one who is conscious of the danger of bad writing must proceed with some deference to caution. He cannot fail to pause and ask himself every now and then in a task, "Is this good or is this bad?" The genius can neither pause nor ask. In fact he doesn't care. His job is to say what he has to say entirely

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without regard to its worth. He can fly because he does not fear to fall.

In "Saint Joan" Shaw is off to such a running start that he is done with two acts before he remembers his responsibility to be Shavian. And then after an interlude he comes back again to the business of telling his story without regard to the establishment of moral precepts through sallies and topical allusions.

It is only when the moral mood is on him that Shaw becomes definitely tedious. It is in such a mood that he wrote the epilogue to "Saint Joan." After the play was done he decided that it must prove something. Of course, the obligation is wholly imaginary. A play doesn't have to prove anything, or at any rate the proof should lie lightly in implication alone. A demonstration is quite unnecessary.

But Shaw, once the fires have been banked, insists on a blackboard talk. The major portion of "Saint Joan" blazes with a fiery faith in the potentialities of the human spirit. But when Shaw comes to write the epilogue he seems to proceed on the assumption that he is dealing with an audience completely idiotic,

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which cannot possibly grasp any point unless it is expounded very patiently twenty times over.

Since "Saint Joan" is a chronicle play, the old controversy as to the relative merits of Shaw and Shakespeare will again become pertinent. This discussion began as a joke in its inception, but it seems to us to demand wholly serious consideration. To us the scene at the court of the Dauphin in "Saint Joan" is far more thrilling and moving than any single scene in the best of Shakespeare's historical plays. And to us there is nothing in any play of Shakespeare's which can command from us the same rapturous attention which we gave to the closing moments of the trial of Joan.

During the time in which Henry Travers as Stogumber was sobbing out his hysterical horror at the burning of the Maid we found ourself seized by an ague. It was unlike anything we had known before in the theatre. We had to go beyond that to the first round of the Dempsey-Firpo fight for a precedent. And perhaps the most fitting tribute which we can pay to Shaw's play is to say that he has created in the theatre something just as stirring as Dempsey's fall through the ropes.

Whenever a dramatic critic expresses a preference

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for Shaw above Shakespeare, it is generally assumed that he is trying to show off and attract attention. But we are willing to put the opinion to the test. Let any average theatregoer see "Saint Joan" and on the next night go to "Antony and Cleopatra." Unless we are completely unbalanced, that theatregoer can hardly fail to find a depth, a subtlety, and a passion in the chronicle play of Shaw which completely transcend anything in this particular tragedy of Shakespeare.

Nor do we believe that our judgment is swayed by the acting. Shakespeare is getting a fair deal in this respect, for it is our notion that Jane Cowl is the finest actress of the American theatre. Her Cleopatra is not as able an achievement as her Juliet, but it is nevertheless an admirable performance.

No, the difference lies in the dramatists. Shakespeare seldom achieves the same heat of sincerity as Shaw. With a few exceptions, the glibness of the Elizabethan outstrips his emotion. We will grant that Shakespeare is the more brilliant of the two. He has a keener ear for the sound of words. He is more adept in orchestral effects. But these very gifts made him all too frequently a little careless.

Shakespeare could not resist the temptation of

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sky-larking off into cadenzas. He knew that he could knock the groundlings for a goal by bearing down on the soft pedal and introducing something tinkling and tuneful. We don't believe he thought of Cleopatra as a figure of compelling tragedy. Indeed, we doubt whether he had any very definite notion about the character of the woman. It was much simpler to fashion a few good comedy scenes for the Egyptian and then round it off with sudden death and eloquence. We have no intention of denying that "Antony and Cleopatra" is excellent entertainment. It's a good show. Nothing could be better for the tired business man.

A TEETH GRITTER FAILS

THE defeat of Molla Bjurstedt Mallory by Suzanne Lenglen was a heartening event to us. It set a limit upon the potentialities of determination. It was generally conceded by all observers, even before the match, that Lenglen was infinitely superior in skill, but the issue remained in doubt because Molla is so richly endowed with the will to win. Suzanne's brilliance, we feared, might get splashed and spattered by the shock of meeting character in full collision. Such a result would have tightened upon existence the tyranny of the teeth gritters.

In the modern world a man without will or character travels naked through a jungle. In our own case, for instance, we live in constant danger of being carried off by insurance agents, stock promoters and men with genuine stray bits of authentically smuggled English woollens. At the present

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moment we own several bales of cloth, much of it with green stripes. The only factor which protects us is that probably we haven't character enough to take any of this stuff to the tailor to have it made up into suits.

We knew perfectly well that we didn't want any of the cloth the day we bought it. The green stripes were plainly visible, but behind them lay a dominant personality. Whenever we said "No" the man just banged it right back at us. There was no passing him with the most skilfully placed negative. He kept storming in until we surrendered and agreed to take the four bolts offered. After that he said that it would be a great saving for us if we bought two more bits he had in his bag and made it an even half dozen.

It has been our misfortune to find ourself constantly associated with determined people. Maybe they are not really so determined. Possibly the contrast only makes it seem so. All day long in this office we hear that menacing, crunching sound which indicates to us that somebody nearby is gritting his teeth about something. The worst of it is that we are entirely surrounded by persons in executive capacities. When they set their jaws it is pretty safe

A TEETH GRITTER FAILS

to assume that they have clamped upon affairs other than their own individual concerns. We are never free for a moment from the notion that some one of them has just decided that it would be a good thing to develop us.

Before Suzanne beat Molla it was our impression that beyond flight or hiding there was no possible defense against the onrush of the determined. The Frenchwoman seems to have hit upon a solution. Apparently she was able to sidestep every now and then enough to let the force of Molla's will sweep the ball right out of the court.

Some such system as that may prove useful to us. We ought to realize by this time that we are incapable of saying "No." We toss it back so feebly that it presents an easy opportunity for a kill. Hereafter we purpose to say nothing at all. Then when somebody grits his teeth he will have no word of ours to masticate.

If any reader happens to know the name and address of some conspicuously weak-willed person and sends it to us he may be a factor in enabling his friend to obtain six bolts of genuine imported English cloth at a ridiculously low figure.

None of the champions whose success rested upon

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determination ever made any appeal to us. Battling Nelson, for instance, was almost without boxing skill. He had nothing but perseverance. In him character was developed to such a remarkable extent that he was able to wear down opponents by hitting their fists with his face.

But for the gleam of hope which is aroused by the occasional downfall of a teeth-gritter, as in the case of the Mallory-Lenglen match, think of the fearful things which might happen in our own community. If a man can become lightweight champion of America for no particular reason except that he is determined to be, what is to prevent all the high and desirable posts from falling into the hands of go-getters?

It is easy to conceive of a time when not only the Government but all the arts will have been taken over by virtue of virility. We can imagine a visitor from a strange land inquiring, "Why on earth has that man been chosen as the leading tenor of the Metropolitan Opera House?" and receiving the answer, "What's the matter with your ear? Aren't you thrilled by his persistency?"

CHIPS OF DOGMA

ALTHOUGH we are given to understand that public gambling has been suppressed in this community, there exists right here in New York, under official auspices, a lottery for stakes far higher than any known in Monte Carlo. The capital prizes are, from a certain point of view at any rate, salvation itself.

We refer to the manner in which the element of chance has been seized upon as a guide to the baptism of foundlings. This roulette of religions permits just two combinations to the player. The betting is all at even money, for foundlings are alternated between Catholicism and Protestantism.

Just when the practice started we don't know, nor have we any information as to the manner in which the first of the waifs was assigned to a faith. But once established, the succession has remained unbroken—Catholic, Protestant, Catholic, Protestant.

It would seem to us that here in New York there

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might be reason in amending the law so that every third child should be a Jew and it might be exciting, just for the gamble of it, to provide that every tenth child should be a Buddhist.

A nurse at Bellevue, who described the workings of the process to us, admitted that there was the possibility of error. "Of course you could tell by looking at him," she said of one of last week's foundlings, "that he was a Jew, but it happened to be the turn for a Catholic and so that's what he is and will be from now on."

We would like to be able to look into the future of this infant, carried into the mother church by the mere tug of permutation. We seem to see him at the age of thirty, sitting in at a meeting of the Membership Committee of his club. The name before the committee is that of Moses Rosenthal.

Our young friend arises and explains that he thinks Mr. Rosenthal is a brilliant and a delightful man. He is, himself, wholly without prejudice. He numbers many Jews among his best friends and yet he feels that there is something instinctively alien in all who belong to this religious group. He has found universally certain things which he calls "Jewish traits" and these are all traits which he

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dislikes. Accordingly, he feels that it will be best for the club to maintain its familiar tradition and request the sponsors of Mr. Rosenthal to withdraw the candidate.

Several hours before the arrival of the child with the black curly hair, there was born into the world another boy, blue-eyed and red-thatched, and he became a Protestant, because it was the turn of Protestantism to take a foundling.

And of him we like to surmise, also. It seems to us that if he could have exchanged the hour of his birth with the black-haired boy he might have become a Cardinal. There is eloquence in him and fervor and the capacity for leadership. That potentiality has been blocked by the turn of the wheel. Pure chance has fastened dissent upon him. As things are, he will grow up to be a Kleagle. As such he will cry out against the Catholic Church and denounce it as a menace to American institutions.

At that point there will step out of the crowd an old man, tottering and whiteheaded (we imagine ourself to be that old man). And the old man will wag a skinny finger at the orator of the afternoon and say: "Young man, are you aware that you have said nothing to-day which does not depend directly

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on the fact that you were born at quarter past 4 on a Thursday afternoon? Do you know that if you had happened to come into the world any time at all that day before 2:15 you would be standing there to plead for the apostolic succession and the everlasting verity of the one true church, not even forgetting the infallibility of the Pope?"

But what interests us even more is the question of the everlasting life of these various foundlings whose little speckled souls are tossed toward hell or heaven in a sort of cosmic game of dice. If it is true, generally speaking, that Catholics are saved and Protestants are not, or vice versa, then we must protest that the stakes are too high. It is not to be endured that a child should lose his hope of heaven for no greater crime than being born late on a Tuesday night instead of early on a Wednesday morning.

As a matter of fact, we are firmly of the opinion that the stakes are not as high as they seem. When the foundlings come home at last, seemingly huge winners because chance has made them Protestant, or the other way round (you see, we must balance this all the way through because we have no sure means of telling) : when the foundlings come home,

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we repeat, it is our notion that there will be somebody on hand to tell them that the terrific stakes for which they played in being born were of no consequence whatsoever. These chips of dogma, denomination and creed are from the eternal point of view without value. The accounts will be torn up. There will be nothing to settle. It was just a game and not a gamble for immortality.

HOW I LOST MY FIGHT WITH NICOTINE

EVERY now and then we think very seriously about swearing off smoking. Tobacco doesn't bother us particularly, but we find matches bad for the nerves. The strain of always having a box on hand is terrific. Our job makes it necessary for us to carry a pencil, and when a person has to be constantly on the alert to be provided with matches, cigarettes and a pencil, the responsibility is too heavy.

We aren't always on the alert. All too often we find that we haven't any matches. Then we must walk almost fifty feet to the city room and borrow one. We try to scatter our requests among the various members of the staff, but it is not possible to avoid repeating. One match may not be so much, but in the course of time obligations develop. There must be men around this office to whom we are indebted to the extent of an entire box. And

HOW I LOST MY FIGHT WITH NICOTINE

being dependent on the bounty of others makes us uncomfortable.

Accordingly, we practically decided yesterday afternoon that we would smoke no more. Just before the resolution was completely nailed down in our mind, along came the mail with a copy of the No-Tobacco Educator. Having read this journal of reform, we have decided to smoke more furiously than ever before. Our desire to curtail our responsibilities is still acute, but we have decided to amend our resolution and swear off matches.

We cite a few of the things in the No-Tobacco Educator which have moved us to develop our bad habit of smoking and make a vice of it.

"What would happen," writes the Rev. G. A. Allison, "if every individual who spends 10 cents a day for tobacco would send a religious paper to twenty homes instead?"

This swept away any financial worries we may have had about tobacco and reminded us that even if we cut off the daily 10-cent drain, we might easily spend the money for something much more foolish.

On another page of the same magazine we find: "No normal person likes tobacco. And when a man

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says he likes tobacco, he is either abnormal or he is a liar."

That inspirited us tremendously. Truthfully, we do like tobacco very much, so it must be that we are abnormal. Of late we had begun to fear that we were not. When the man in "The Good Old Days" remarked, "You told me you'd sell the place for a song, so of course you'll take my notes," we were shocked to discover ourself joining in the burst of merriment which swept the theatre. And when the old barkeeper closed up the dear old saloon, the last night before Prohibition, and turned off the light in the torch held by the miniature Statue of Liberty, we held back the tears with difficulty.

Yes, we began to worry that we were moving toward normality so fast that another week might find us sobbing in the front row at "Abie's Irish Rose." But now we know that our liking for tobacco is a saving grace. We are not as other men, and every time we light a new cigaret pride will surge over us as we realize that, though appearances may be against us, we are actually abnormal.

But perhaps the most persuasive propaganda for smoking in the entire tract is contained in an article called "Almost Persuaded," which is as follows:

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“‘You say you smoke thirty cigarets a day?’

“‘Yes, on an average.’

“‘And you don’t think they hurt you?’

“‘Not in the least. I blame my hard work.’

“The physician shook his head and smiled, but evidently he was vexed. He reached across a table and took a leech from a glass jar.

“‘Let me show you something,’ he said. ‘Bare your arm.’

“The smoker bared his pale arm, and the doctor laid the black leech upon it. The hungry leech soon fell to work. Its body began to swell. Then all of a sudden a kind of shudder convulsed it and it fell to the floor, dead.

“‘That’s what your blood did to that leech,’ said the physician. He took up the little corpse between his finger and thumb. ‘Look at it,’ he said. ‘Quite dead, you see. You poisoned it.’

“‘I guess it wasn’t a healthy leech in the first place,’ said the smoker sullenly.

“‘You think it wasn’t healthy? Well, we’ll try another.’ And the physician took out two other leeches and placed them on the young man’s arm.

“‘If these die,’ said the patient, ‘I’ll swear off—or I’ll cut my allowance down to ten.’

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"Even as he spoke, the smaller leech quivered and dropped off, dead. A moment later, the larger one fell beside it.

" 'This is ghastly,' said the young man; 'I'm worse than a pestilence to these leeches.'

" 'This is caused by the poisonous chemicals of tobacco in your blood,' said the medical man. 'All users of tobacco have this condition.'

" 'Doctor,' said the young man thoughtfully, 'I half believe you're right.' "

And that was a curious reaction upon the part of the young man. Ours was just the opposite, but then you know we are abnormal. If the choice between leeches and cigarets was ever put up to us, we would choose cigarets every time. We have no desire to be the pride and support of any leech. If one got on our arm we would be in favor of his dying just as soon as possible. There even comes to us the happy thought that by increasing our allowance of tobacco we may accumulate a large enough store of poisonous chemicals in the blood to be a pestilence to all passing mosquitoes.

The No-Tobacco Educator also offers what seems to us convincing evidence that a good many abstainers are not quite bright. On the cover of

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the magazine is an article by the Rev. George W. Thumm, Malden, W. Va., called "A Little Child Shall Lead."

"A few years ago," begins Mr. Thumm, "I kept a store and was selling tobacco. On Sunday I taught a class of small boys in a Sunday school. Teaching a temperance lesson one Sunday, I told the boys the results of using alcoholic drinks and explained to them how sinful it would be for them to blight their lives with tobacco.

"A seven-year-old boy said, 'If it is wrong for us to use tobacco, is it not wrong for you to sell it?'" At this question I was astonished. For a moment I stood speechless."

If Mr. Thumm had only kept his head clear with cigarets, he would have seen this question coming from the very beginning and would have had sense enough to give up his Sunday school class before any seven-year-old child could show him up in that fashion.

OUR FRIEND THE DARK

MARATHON dancing isn't the most sensible thing in the world, but it has served to tread on the toes of at least two fallacies. Belief in the frailty of women has led to chivalry and other forms of oppression. Well, in all the stories of long distance dancing which we have read it has been necessary to provide a succession of male partners to make a record breaking performance possible.

And it is also worthy of note that the young women who have set the marks at fifty hours and upward have been invariably city bred and city dwellers. Apparently with no preliminary training they have stepped out of offices and stores and proceeded to achieve feats of endurance which seem to transcend the most flashy stunts of men in the matter of long extended physical effort.

It may well be that the young women have succeeded in dancing themselves out of subway seats.

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Hereafter the average man is going to think deeply before getting up to offer his place to any member of the sex which seems so proficient in supplying champions able to stand on their feet for days at a time and even sway a little.

There can be no question of the physical superiority of man in short, concentrated physical tests. His marks for the hundred yard dash, the quarter, the half and, in fact, all the standard distances are far beyond the best which women have ever accomplished. Of course there are reasons against generalizing too much on this seeming margin of superiority, for the number of women engaged in competitive athletics is still insignificant and, moreover, the sex has yet to acquire an athletic tradition. These fifteen seconds girls may quite possibly have great-granddaughters who will do the hundred in ten flat.

But aside from all these highly specialized events there is some reason to believe that in the mere matter of endurance over a long period women are at least the equals of men. It may even be that biology spared men the task of bearing children because they would never have been able to stand it. The weaker sex, indeed!

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Few civilizations have allowed woman much chance to step out, but her whole environment has given her compulsory training in hanging on. She can outlast us. One of the most absurd fallacies which still persist is the legal fiction whereby it is assumed that in an accident a woman dies before the man. We don't believe it. Man is generally more highly developed, more sensitized, more emotional, less rugged in his resistance to pain, less important to nature's preoccupation with perpetuating life. Obviously under similar conditions of injury, it will be the man and not the woman who will die first.

As for the city dwellers, we are glad to have their stamina proved and justified, even by so silly a pastime as Marathon dancing. They have more to contribute to life than the people on the farms and in the hamlets and it would be a grave injustice to make them more brittle. It may be that in frontier days the pioneer was hardier than the folk in the settlements, but to-day the ease of country life has sapped the vitality of the farmer and made him flabby. For him there is no daily ordeal like the subway rush to build up the capacity for bodily re-

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sistance. The eye trained to dodge cows can hardly be as keen as that inured to getting out of the way of taxicabs. Here in the jungle we must be alert and the threat of instant death on every hand sharpens the senses.

But probably the greatest factor in undermining the physical efficiency of the farmer is his addiction to sleep. Nature intended man to be a night prowler. When big animals ranged the earth our ancestors hid in caves until dark. Early rising was considered neither healthy nor wise when mammoths roamed the primeval forests. If nature had intended man to spend much time in daylight pursuits she would have given him green spots or some other protective coloration. Instead she implanted deep within him a love of late hours.

Scholars who have worked upon the most primitive of cave writing agree that the earliest connected sentence to be found is, "Why, it's just the shank of the evening," or its equivalent. Indeed a Patagonian scientist explains the prevalence of the circle in many ancient conventionalized pictures on the ground that it was used as a symbol for, "Just one more round and we'll all go home."

With the beginning of husbandry artificiality came

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into the life of man. He began to abandon the promptings of nature and get up at 6 o'clock in the morning. There should be little difficulty in proving that such a regimen was not in the plan of creation. It makes no difference what time a man goes to bed, he will still be sleepy at 6 o'clock in the morning. Even though he has slept for nine or ten hours, drowsiness hangs upon his lids. The habits set by his ancestors tens of thousands of years ago are not to be lightly set aside. The subconscious knows that getting up at 6 o'clock in the morning is immoral and unnatural behavior.

Primitive memories are much stronger in children than in grown-ups, and even very small youngsters will protest violently against going to bed early. Far from being a product of sophistication, the taste for late hours is an ancient heritage. Primitive man needed a secluded spot for his sleeping, but he also desired enough light to make careful preliminary investigation that there were no serpents about or other stealthy and treacherous foes, and the infant of eight months or less in our own day still has enough of this instinct to protest violently against sleeping in the dark.

When the sun is high and hot it possesses valuable

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sedative qualities of which man should avail himself. Normalcy demands that waking should occur along about 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when the coolth begins and the tides of the body have just turned from ebb to flood. For there is a tide in the human body. Even people who have lived artificially for years are never at their best in the morning. Sixty-one per cent. of all marital disputes which end in divorce or separation begin at the breakfast table. These figures cover the United States exclusive of Vermont and South Dakota, which failed to file statistics of the last census. But probably these returns would not materially alter the results, even though Vermonters serve pie at breakfast.

Again and again we have decided that some individual was deadly dull, only to meet him at 2 o'clock in the morning and discover that once his real nature had a chance to assert itself he scintillated.

Naturally all great prose masterpieces were composed after midnight. It is after midnight that people begin to talk about sex, immortality, religion, education, government, ethics, cookery and all the subjects which are really important. And yet in spite of these incontrovertible facts we are about to

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enter upon still another term of daylight saving. We still fail to realize that the sun is our enemy and that darkness, nature's most beneficent gift to man, is something to be received gratefully and wide-eyed.

THE INCOME OF H. THIRD

"YES, I think every child should have an allowance," says Angelo Patri in an interview in *The Evening World*. "An allowance teaches a child how to spend and how to save. . . . It is surprising how much confidence a child will acquire, how proud he will be, if he is allowed to save money. He will figure out for himself how he can save a penny here and a penny there, to add to his savings. And if he starts to save very early, he will have a snug little bank account by the time he is fifteen years old.

"But it is up to his parents to teach him how to save. He must not be allowed to grow selfish and egotistical in his savings. The time may come when the money a child has saved may be extended toward the use of the family. He must not be allowed to grow so selfish in his savings that in the event of such circumstances he will refuse to part with the money."

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We find much consolation in the last remark of Mr. Patri's. The time to which he refers is rapidly approaching in our house. Although we don't exactly make H. 3d an allowance, we did buy him a dime bank. It has been very amusing to watch the assurance with which he has approached all visitors and asked them for money. Of course he prefers dimes, but at our suggestion he refuses nothing. We help him out in his childish schemes and whenever he gets a quarter we supply two dimes in exchange. Even the penny which the plumber gave him was not disdained.

Apparently, H. 3rd derives no end of pleasure from putting dimes in the bank and watching the figures change on the dial. The fund has mounted with amazing rapidity. Often while we are away for a day at the office we find that as much as a dollar or so has been added to the total during our absence.

There is no possible way of getting money out until \$10 has been deposited. When that sum is reached the tin door opens automatically—at least such is the promise of the directions on the back of the contraption. There has been some little dispute

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as to what is to be the disposal of the money when it gushes out. We can't see what on earth H. 3rd could possibly do with \$10. And after all, he has had all the fun of putting the money in. We haven't handled a single dime of it.

Moreover, we did buy the bank. As Angelo Patri says, a child ought not to be allowed to become selfish and egotistical. We hope to be able to effect a compromise. It is our notion that H. 3rd will undoubtedly be willing to let us have the \$10 if we promise to return the bank immediately after it has disgorged and agree to let him start out on a new campaign to fill it up again.

As for "the snug little bank account" which the saving child might acquire by the time he is fifteen we have reserved judgment. We want the respect of our child when he grows up. There would be no particular point in raising up somebody to comment on our shiftlessness. If we let the money accumulate until his fifteenth year it might be a great deal harder to get it away from him. Business transactions are much simpler when only one party in the deal is able to count.

And worse than that, we have the fear that the

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possession of a fortune might put notions into the head of H. 3rd. We seem to see a morning eleven years hence. H. 3rd is now fifteen years old and is reading *The World*. He appears to be looking over the columns of the page opposite the editorials. For a time he chuckles to himself and we know that he is still on the Conning Tower. Then he begins to shake his head doubtfully. Protesting wrinkles appear in his forehead. He looks across the table and smiles indulgently at us.

"Still muddling around with that old fashioned radicalism," he says not unkindly.

Now his tone is friendly but firmer. "Heywood," he says, picking his words carefully, "you can't seem to get it into your head that private property also has its rights. Liberty, yes, we can agree on that, but not license.

"Here," he adds, tossing over a segment of the paper, "you can have it all but the financial section. I want to see what Pressed Steel Car preferred did yesterday."

"He should be given an allowance when he begins to need money for simple, everyday needs," continues Mr. Patri in his discussion of juvenile finance. "Sometimes this allowance can start when

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he is four years old. And from the time he first starts to save he should be taught to keep an account book of his spendings and savings. If he spends 2 cents for a stamp, he should have a small blank book and jot down '2 cents for a stamp.' Then at the end of a week he should figure out how much he has spent and how much he has saved. The child's parents should guide him in the keeping of this book—show him where he may save and where he might have spent a little more judiciously."

When it comes to stamps, we have always believed in people's accepting the first price quoted by the drug-store man. Haggling doesn't get you enough to make it worth while. Of course the child might be shown how he could have obtained two green ones instead of a single red for his two pennies, but it seems to us unsound to make a child too shrewd about such things. The first thing you know he might grow up to be a Rockefeller. According to our plan, H. 3rd is going to be a column conductor when he gets old enough. It would be fatal to instil in him any such slavish respect for stamps as Mr. Patri suggests. It would just break his heart in a job like this. He couldn't possibly get any work done because of his belief in his obligation to soak

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the stamps off the self-addressed envelopes sent in by readers.

More than that, it would shock us a great deal to find any four-year-old child jotting things down in a little notebook. His father's system of book-keeping is plenty good enough for H. 3rd. A couple of times a week he can go to the window and ask the teller, "Have I got any more money left in this bank?" All the banks we have ever dealt with have been very obliging in letting us know when it was all gone.

Anyhow, why should H. 3rd want a stamp except to stick it on the wall, or something like that? Even in a columnist's household, where stamps are free, they ought not to be plastered around so carelessly. H. 3rd hasn't got anybody to write to as far as we know. It's possible, of course, that he might want to send a letter to Santa Claus and in that case we might be able to point out to him "where he might save." No matter what rate the Government quotes on the delivery, we will guarantee to do it not only cheaper but more expeditiously.

BACK TO THE RAINBOW

THIS, we are informed, is Autumn Neckwear Week and we have decided to co-operate by wearing a necktie throughout the period assigned to the celebration.

However, we are not disposed to dismiss the subject of neckties casually, because it is a problem which enlists our emotions. Nobody ever has taken neckties with sufficient seriousness. We have even known men who went into the haberdasher's and said "Let me have a necktie," which seems to us just as ignominious as the not unfamiliar formula of "Please let me have a book."

The one suggestion in the festival proclamation which worries us is the qualifying word "autumn." The necktie men, we fear, are seeking to promote the theory that during the sadder seasons some recognition of the fading glories of the world should be expressed in cravats. We know that there is

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such a notion abroad in the world, because only the other day we asked a friend, "How do you like this necktie?" (It happened to be the one in two blues with red and yellow splotches) and he replied "it might be all right for summer."

We are prepared to fight any such craven surrender. We purpose to stand by the colors. The leaves may go into dull browns if they please and the trees turn black, but give us a scarf with sap in it for any sort of weather.

Man was not meant to be the slave of the seasons. He may win a moral victory of sorts by putting on his gayest and bravest shades to indicate his indifference to the most chilling blasts. Indeed, throughout the year no necktie is worthy unless it contains some hint of revolt. We are all dun by the cruelty of customary clothes. Nothing more than a stripe of red or some dim checks of purple and green are allowed to us on coat and trousers. But the cravat is an escape. They have taken away our doublet and hose, the ruffles from our wrists, the plumes from our hats, and so no man of any spirit should ever wear a necktie without being able to say as he puts it on: "Oh, you would, would you!"

And the necktie itself should be articulate. It

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should be gallant in its incompatibility with the mediocre colors which are forced upon our backs. Some hint of revolt, did we say? Even that seems to us mean spirited and niggardly. Rather let us have neckties which are irreconcilables and shout aloud the stirring slogan "Back to the rainbow!"

Of course we do not intend to suggest that freedom through neckwear is in any way easy. The shops are filled with time-serving and compromising cravats. Silk as often as not is squelched into black and the more dreary browns. But unless our eyes deceive us a new note is creeping in. Up to a year ago we had never encountered a cravat which really seemed what you might call loud. Recently we have come across one or two which moved us to think "Radicalism is a fine thing, and all that, but criminal anarchy is something else again."

The thing which encourages us is the discovery of neckties which attempt more than a short and conventional theme. The serialized color scheme is coming in. Here and there we find ties in which the pattern at the bottom departs radically from that at the top instead of striking the same note over and over again.

We have seen promising neckties, ingenious neck-

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ties, arresting neckties, quarts and quarts of adequate neckties, but we have yet to encounter anything which we could conscientiously call a great necktie. The field lies open, beckoning to genius.

Perhaps some change in the basic nature of the industry is necessary to encourage and foster high talent. First of all, anonymity should be done away with. At present we have no label except that of the shopkeeper or the manufacturer. Clearly that is insufficient. It would be like naming no playwright and simply classifying plays as Shubert, Al Woods or Erlanger. We confess that we don't even know how a necktie comes into being.

The person we are interested in is the idea man. He is the one whose name should be signed at the bottom of the cravat. We don't know whether he works in paint, water colors, pastel or directly upon the material itself. But at any rate he should be allowed to sit in some pleasant place until inspiration comes upon him and then when he has finished his masterpiece the world ought to know that he did it. The mere merchandiser is not important.

Money, honor and reputation go to the men who fashion combinations of color which we hang upon the walls of rooms where they are seen by few and

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infrequently. Why should we be so careless of the colors which we hang about our necks? Why can't a young man be encouraged to sit down and resolve "I am now about to compose the great American necktie?"

In the days to come, when we begin to realize that art ought to be brought into everyday life, such things will come to pass. Then when one passerby stops another to say, "I certainly like that necktie, it has a quality of sincerity and emotion," he may be answered, "Yes, it's a Sargent."

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Cleveland, June 10.—

When Theodore E. Burton made his keynote speech for the Republicans this morning he waved every now and again, as emotion lagged, the name of Lincoln. And then he was done, and after a little while there came on to the platform a man who had seen Lincoln and known him.

Addison G. Proctor of St. Joseph, Mich., is the last living delegate who voted for Lincoln when he was nominated by the Republicans in 1860. He came to tell what he remembered of these things of sixty-four years ago.

His shoulders stooped, but he walked with high head and did not need the arm offered by one of the convention clerks. Mr. Proctor stepped beyond the amplifiers, for these had not been known at that other convention. Mr. Burton steered him into

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place and the voice of the old man rose loud, strong and impassioned, for he spoke of slavery and of how he and his fellows had decided that it must go no further.

"We wanted to save the West," he cried, and he flung out his hand to indicate some distant horizon beyond the last row of the deep convention hall. It seemed as if this was again the year 1860 in the mind of the last delegate.

He spoke of Lincoln as a man who lived, and not as a framed portrait perched upon the bunting back of the platform. He explained why Seward would not do, and again he cried out, "We had to save the West," and thrust out his hands.

A curious thing happened. The delegates who had sat through Burton's long speech began to wriggle and to rustle. It was time for lunch and many got up to go. The feet of the old man were firmly set back beyond the half-century mark. Nineteen twenty-four was not interested in 1860. It was only too evident that nothing pertinent was in the mind of the man of memories.

From the name of Lincoln he would draw no moral of the evils of reckless investigation in the matter of oil lands. And when he spoke of saving

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the West he had no thought of the protection of sound business threatened by the raids of radical agitators.

He wanted to make the picture step out of the gold frame. It seemed to be within his hope to resurrect the dead leader and set to marching down the aisle in the full light of day a tall gaunt figure. That would have been interesting.

For if the figure from the frame had left the wall and walked into the convention he would have passed, quite closely, John T. Adams. And then if he proceeded straight ahead he might have brushed by Burton, who had spoken well of him.

Down from the platform and up the aisle and at his elbow sits Henry Cabot Lodge. It might have been necessary for the gaunt man to stoop a little in order to see the Senator from Massachusetts. One step more and Nicholas Murray Butler is beside him; Wadsworth, Smoot, Longworth, Sutherland, Weeks and all the giants among his fellow Republicans.

The clerk upon the platform plucked at the sleeve of Addison G. Proctor and whispered to him. Evidently the clerk mumbled that it was not necessary

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to go on and tell precisely what sort of a person was this Lincoln. It was enough to have mentioned the name. The speaker nodded. He stood with both hands outspread.

"It had to be Lincoln," he said, "because we knew that we needed somebody bigger than all the others." Again the clerk plucked at the sleeve of Proctor, and the delegates laughed at the old man, who wanted to talk about a living Lincoln. They applauded, but they edged toward the doors at the same time.

Proctor stopped and Burton patted him on the back and said he had done nicely. He reassured the man who knew Lincoln that he had talked just the right length. He pointed out that it was almost lunch time. But he forgot to add that anyhow this was a convention that was going to nominate Calvin Coolidge.

Cleveland, June 11——

The creator of the universe was instructed this morning for Calvin Coolidge.

In his opening prayer Rabbi Samuel Schulman

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of Temple Beth-el, New York, called the attention of Jehovah to the manner in which Mr. Coolidge has demonstrated that character is the most precious of heritages.

And he reminded the Lord that America furnishes evidence that the Kingdom of Heaven is at last beginning to be realized on earth. But he did admit that foreigners seemed to be lagging a little.

It seems to me that the most irreligious rite which prevails in America is the opening prayer at political conventions. This is not meant to apply only to the invocation delivered this morning by Rabbi Schulman, but to all occasions upon which God is asked to direct and supervise the doings of any political gathering, even though it be the convention of one of the major parties.

Invariably after the platform has been adopted and the standard bearers selected, there remain boulders to faith and ammunition for rationalists. The custom simply serves to remind the community that Divinity employs wondrous instruments and curious.

Still, the prayer of the clergyman who officiated this morning seemed more than usually earth-bound.

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He chose to be both oratorical and informative in communicating with his Maker.

Among many preachers the delusion seems to exist that God has access only to the weekly journals of opinion and can hardly be expected to be wholly conversant with spot news from the five star finals.

Accordingly to-day's prayer kindly furnished a digest of the Republican doings up to date. Mention was made of the purposes of the party, and its achievements were not neglected. In effect the Lord was advised to keep Coolidge, though the other half of the slogan was not emphasized.

OBVIOUSLY a certain damage has been done to the human imagination by the literal quality which creeps so constantly into religious art. Painters of the infinite have been inclined to picture the God of hosts as a being gray and bearded. Accordingly, it has become the custom to pray as to one a little deaf.

After all prayer ought to be considered quite as miraculous as radio. In the broadcasting stations the man who would send his voice from New York

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to California is told that he may speak in ordinary tones. No such faith appeared to animate Rabbi Schulman this morning.

Even the amplifier just in front of him seemed to inspire no confidence that a whisper from the heart might float to heaven. Instead, he boomed for grace and shouted for sanctification. And in order that there need be no misconception upon the part of eternal listeners, not one device of oratorical effect was neglected. Jehovah might have been a juryman.

And as the chaplain spoke, and it is always so, something of the fine edge of faith must have been endangered in the hearts of 12,000. Delegates and spectators stood and after the first ten minutes they began to shift from foot to foot. Under the thundering cascade of the prayer there darted out the rattle of telegraph keys. Papers waiting to be born are impatient. And some of the reporters ticked at typewriters, taking down, perhaps, words of the rabbi so that even Heaven itself should not learn the news story much before readers of the home edition.

Presently the delegates grew a little too impatient to be content only with swaying back and forth.

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Eddies of whispering whirled here and there across the floor. Mondell, weighted down with a keynote speech, steadied himself against his chair. The sceptical and cynical eyebrows of Henry Cabot Lodge climbed up another half inch.

But it was not quite feasible to pluck at the arm of this speaker as it was to nudge a hint against the elbow of the man who talked yesterday of Lincoln. Sermons and prayers are privileged.

The rabbi spoke of the earth's great need of tolerance and of the sweetness of amity between race and race and creed and creed. And Klansmen and Catholics and Negroes heard the sound of words which raced by and broke against the far wall of the building and were known no more.

There came a final plea for the peace of God, and delegates began to talk and stamp about a bit to restore circulation. Mondell cleared his throat and came close to the amplifier to divide sheep and goats.

He spoke of the Children of Darkness who are Democrats and the Children of Light who are Republicans. He spoke of the party "that has never proposed nor advocated an unwise or unsound national policy." Indeed he almost made it seem as

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if the prayer for Divine guidance had been just a shade unnecessary.

And I think it was. The convention had bathed in benediction and come out dry-shod.

Madison Square Garden, June 25——

“The organization known as the Ku Klux Klan.”

It was named in a voice which rang out through the convention hall. At last a man had walked straight forward and stood face to face with the ghost in the haunted garden.

A slight man, tight-lipped, with sharp bridged nose of fighting stock, slashed clean through the conspiracy of silence. His name is Forney Johnson and he comes from Alabama. He took the platform to place in nomination Oscar Underwood.

Many another speaker at the convention has mentioned “religious liberties” and “constitutional guarantees” and “equality,” but this was not enough to lay the spectre which stalked the aisles.

Until Forney Johnson spoke, the delegates of the Democratic Party lived and moved in the thick vapor of a wizard’s spell. It was held, and apparently believed, that the nature of the charm was such that the name of the sorcerer must not be

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spoken aloud. One might, if he liked, speak ill of necromancy and whisper behind his hand that he, personally, had no use for black magic. But to cry aloud the name of the wizard's crew was to bring down damnation, sudden, curious and terrible.

The magic wand had drawn a circle, and in this hall of the trolls all must walk round about and talk round about. Forney Johnson stepped across this circle and bisected it.

No wall crumbled. No doom descended. A great shout rose from throats loosed out of the spell. In the aisle beside the Colorado standard one man punched another in the nose. And that other was a Klansman. When his nose was punched it bled and he grew angry and hit back.

And now it was known that these sometimes sheeted figures were neither gods nor devils, but merely instructed delegates. And perhaps many remembered that the great Wizard of the order is not truly a man of magic but a "painless dentist."

Nor were the usual mundane processes of the law ineffective in dealing with the disturbance aroused by the laying of the ghost. The Klansman battling to hold the Colorado standard was for the moment in a bad way, though he may have been even a

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Kleagle. In the scuffle the head of the Ku Kluxer became wedged in the metal frame of the standard of his State. It seemed either that he must completely follow the pole, which was being dragged out into the aisle, or at least allow his head and neck to make the journey.

But help was at hand. Not goblins or ghostly riders galloped to his aid, but Lieut. Martin Noonan of the New York police. Noonan tugged the head from the metal noose and garroting ceased. He pushed the combatants apart.

"Mr. Rickard won't let you fight here," said Noonan, "unless you've got a contract."

And so ended the first battle of the Colorado.

It was not the last, for the delegation of that State is split in half—six for Smith and six for McAdoo—and whenever the impulse comes to demonstrate, the toughness of the standard pole is tested. They should have chosen a staff of elastic instead of pine.

Dramatically, the present convention is made. It has now achieved one of the finest thrills known to any modern convention. Before the fog lifted, doings were dull. Senator Walsh's speech was

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wholly ineffective. There was a faint cheer at the announcement that Charles the First had lost his head, but the rest was silence.

Richard Enright, Police Commissioner, took the platform to make announcements, and informed the delegates that Sparta had no walls, but they refused to get excited about it.

Forney Johnson captured little attention in the beginning of his speech when he took the platform after Gov. Brandon had announced, according to traditional form, "Alabama responds." But in handling his Klan attack Johnson was a master playwright. He built up to it slowly and surely, working from the general to the particular.

"Above all," he said, "does the candidate we represent condemn the massed action of secret political orders in furtherance of any objective which is plainly contrary to the spirit of the Constitution."

That was applauded, but still he had not yet named the name. He did it by reading the text of Underwood's own proposal for the platform. It is not new. It had already been printed. But for the first time it was spoken in public and out loud.

The demonstration which followed was not the longest of the convention. Many a carefully pre-

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pared uproar will outlast it in the mere matter of time. But this was a sudden cheer, a real cheer and it ran deep, deep as the grave of the ghost which once had walked in the garden.

Madison Square Garden, June 30—

It is related in St. Mark that Jesus came to a place called Gethsemane and it was a garden. And to this garden went Judas, "And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master ; and kissed him."

In Madison Square Saturday night William Jennings Bryan testified his love of Christ and voted for the Ku Klux Klan.

Mr. Bryan explained his vote by saying that he did not think the Ku Klux Klan should be advertised in the platform of the Democratic Party. And as he pleaded against giving publicity to the Klan he stood in the glare of ten great Klieg spotlights while 15,000 in the hall, and millions outside, listened to the debate on the most fiery issue presented to any National Convention in fifty years. It was a little as if Noah on the twenty-ninth day, had said, "Let's hush up the matter that there's been quite a spell of rain around here lately."

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"You may call me a coward if you will," Mr. Bryan continued in developing his argument, "but there is nothing in my life to justify the charge that I am a coward."

That's as it may be, but it is true that Saturday night Mr. Bryan's betrayal of his country was not actuated by fear. No such kindly explanation is possible. The poor frightened woman from Georgia who changed her vote over to the forces of the Klan was afraid. She could hardly whisper the "no" which helped largely to decide the result. But Bryan spoke fearlessly in a loud, clear voice with oratorical interludes. He did that which he wanted to do.

For William Jennings Bryan is the very type and symbol of the spirit of the Ku Klux Klan. He has never lived in a land of men and women. To him this country has been from the beginning peopled by believers and heretics. According to his faith mankind is base and cursed. Human reason is a snare, and so Bryan has made oratory the weapon of his aggressions.

When professors in precarious jobs disagreed with him about evolution, Mr. Bryan has never argued the issue, but instead has turned bully and burned fiery crosses at their doors. Once he wrote

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to a friend: "We will drive Darwinism from the schools. The agnostics who are undermining the faith of our students will be glad enough to teach anything the people want taught when the people speak with emphasis. My explanation is that a man who believes he has brute blood in him will never be a martyr. Only those who believe they are made in the image of God will die for a truth. We have all the Elijahs on our side."

Of course, that is not quite true. William Jennings Bryan was a pacifist for the glory of God. Eugene V. Debs was a pacifist for the glory of man. It was Mr. Debs who went to jail.

But, true or untrue, Mr. Bryan's letter is revelatory. Jesus Christ was the first and greatest teacher of democracy because his mission in the world was to win belief. He made faith the test of the human soul. Mr. Bryan is content to compel conformity.

In the present convention the Ku Klux Klansmen were not in the least concerned with what the delegates thought about them. They were only interested in what was said. The demand was simply that the platform should be silent. Mr. Bryan can understand that philosophy.

I said that Mr. Bryan spoke fearlessly, but I will

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not say that he spoke truthfully. He said many things which were obviously false. His capacity for folly and misconception is great, but even so, I think he knew that he spoke falsely.

"THERE is not a State in the Union," he said, "where anybody whose rights are denied cannot go and find redress."

If a Negro in Mr. Bryan's Florida went to the polls and tried to vote, where could he go when his right was denied? Not to William Jennings Bryan, for Mr. Bryan is on record as giving complete approval to the policy of his adopted State in handling the race question. And so in this instance Mr. Bryan knew that he did not speak the truth.

And again he said, "Anybody can fight the Ku Klux Klan, but only the Democratic Party can stand between the common people and their oppressors in this land."

Mr. Bryan did not specify just where one might look for a political champion against the Klan. No voice was raised in Cleveland and the defiance which might have been sounded here was stilled by Mr. Bryan himself. And as yet no one knows

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whether La Follette will speak out on the Fourth of July.

"The Catholic Church," said Mr. Bryan, "does not need a great party to protect it from 1,000,000 men. The Jews do not need this resolution. They have Moses. They have Elijah. They have Elisha."

Well, personally, I wouldn't have Elisha if I could. He was another spiritual Ku Kluxer, who, when little children mocked him, sent she-bears to devour them instead of turning them over to the duly constituted authorities of the Juvenile Court. And I have not Moses or the Catholic Church. Do I, therefore, sacrifice my right to stand against the Klan?

"The Democratic party has never taken the side of one church against another," said Mr. Bryan in perhaps the most monstrous falsification of the issue which occurred in his whole speech. He knows it is not an issue between church and church. In the convention he heard speaker after speaker declare that though the Klan might not be against himself he was against the Klan.

Underwood is not colored, Catholic, Jewish nor foreign born, but he was the first man in the convention to come out against the Klan. It is imperti-

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nent to say, as some have said: "Why, some of the best people in the Catholic Church don't want the Klan named in the platform." That is nothing to me. Is Mr. Bryan's conception of civic duty and patriotism so feeble that he thinks one should fight only those who fight him? After all, the dragon had done nothing to St. George personally. It was St. George's own idea to go out and slay the monster.

Anatole France once wrote a story of a juggler who lived in the days of St. George, and this juggler was possessed of a magic formula by which he could change himself at will into a fiery dragon. But then he heard of what had happened to one dragon, and after that he changed himself into a rabbit. Mention "Republican" to Bryan and he too can puff himself up into a great avenging monster who roars and breathes fire. And after that, just for the sake of the experiment, whisper to him "Ku Klux Klan."

"Three words were more to them than the welfare of a party in a great campaign," said Bryan. As it happens the phrase 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' also consists of three words."

Every now and then I get letters which begin, "Although I am not a member of the Klan" and go

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on to say, "Why do you condemn this order without a fair hearing? Do you know anything about it except what you have read in the lying newspapers?"

I do. With my own eyes I have seen the Klan at work. I saw the knights riding on Saturday night, full tilt, to serve a cause. And did they ride against some monstrous oppressor, this devoted little band, only fifty-five strong. Well, not exactly. They were charging down upon one woman in the Georgia delegation who happened to have voted against them. She was faint, frightened and of feeble will. They called on her to change her vote and when she slumped back into her seat without speaking they dragged at her arm and pulled her up again. And when with a last despairing flutter she tried still to keep silent the men of Georgia, the knights of the Klan, bawled out for her the word which they had commanded that she should speak.

And Mr. Bryan asked us in Madison Square Garden to recognize the honesty of the Ku Klux Klan.

There was a man who aided Bryan in the betrayal. It does not matter much that his name is McAdoo. For a time during the coming week he will be heard of as a small minority party bickers to see which of

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its sons shall be named to take a licking in November. And in four years the question will be asked, "who was McAdoo?"

But Bryan I know will persist. His addiction to delivering lectures has undermined the semblance of sincerity which was once an effective factor in his performances. His power for evil dwindles, but I have no hope but that he will wriggle until sundown.

Madison Square Garden, July 2———

"I can't hear you, Mr. Bryan."

These words of Patrick J. Haltigan, Reading Clerk of the Democratic Convention, marked the beginning of the last chapter in the story of the great platform performer of America. He is now a great-grandfather.

For the first time in his long political career William Jennings Bryan failed upon a platform. His speech in Madison Square Garden yesterday was obviously and wholly ineffective. He asked the delegates to nominate McAdoo, and on the succeeding roll-call McAdoo lost half a vote.

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Three factors contributed to the collapse.

The voice of to-day is not the voice which stamped the convention of 1896. When Bryan rose on the thirty-eighth ballot to say, "Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to explain my vote." Haltigan was obliged to ask him to say it again.

Not only has the voice of Mr. Bryan begun to dwindle, but other voices are catching up with him. The amplifier has served to establish a new vocal equality among all orators. In San Francisco, four years ago, Mr. Bryan boldly stepped away from the amplifier, ready and eager to make his plea with his own voice, unaided by any new-fangled device. And four years ago he could be heard to the furthestmost corner of the hall. Now he could not.

And years have dulled his platform capacities in other respects. Even in his best days Mr. Bryan was less than a sheer genius in a set speech. What he needed was opposition. He liked to drive in the teeth of the wind and always he found occasion to raise some hostile gale, so that he might set his face against it. His power to render the opposition articulate still persists, but now he falters and gives ground a little once he has succeeded in conjuring up choppy seas.

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Yesterday he scored just once with a quick turn of phrase. "This is probably the last convention of my party in which I shall be a delegate," he said, and when his foes applauded he added: "Don't applaud, I may change my mind."

He was not again effective in debate. Cries of "oil," and "Doheny" disturbed him, and in reply to a direct question as to the legal activities of his candidate, he could only answer, "If any oil has touched William G. McAdoo, the insistent, persistent, virulent opposition of Wall Street washes all the oil away."

Mr. Bryan's religious friends may well object to this new theory of sanctification and redemption.

Years ago William Jennings Bryan was that curious and unusual type of man who thinks better on his feet than at any other time. It is not so now. Persistent lecturing has robbed him of the faculty to create a phrase in the time it takes for a gesture to swing above the shoulder and back again.

He can be, and has been in the present convention, driven to retire to previously prepared positions. Like an Arctic explorer, he must depend upon canned goods. In his speech against the anti-Klan Plank Saturday night he was forced to fall back

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upon whole paragraphs of his "Prince of Peace" lecture. When booed and heckled yesterday he had recourse to ten minutes of material which was lifted word for word from a newspaper syndicate article which he published three days ago.

Once the shouts of the enemy only made the blade of Bryan flash the more brightly. But now the sword arm grows a little weary. Mr. Bryan is sixty-four.

Speaking at the beginning of his speech of Murphree, Bryan said, "He is a Democratic scholar and a scholarly Democrat." And these were precisely the words he used to a little group of newspaper men who talked to him in the corridor of a Cleveland hotel more than two weeks ago.

But the process of slowing up goes even deeper than this. Not only has the voice of Bryan begun to fray, but so has his political philosophy. Twenty-eight years ago he stood before the country as a radical. To-day, on any logical evaluation of policies, he cannot stand as a progressive. Tides of thought have passed him by.

To be sure, the old phrases still tinkle, but there is no substance. Although he lacks any definite plan Mr. Bryan would like to see the farmers make more

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money. That is not precisely the slogan to stam-
pede the galleries in the greatest of American in-
dustrial cities. He told the convention that his
brother Charles had succeeded in giving the people
cheaper gasoline. In 1896 Mr. Bryan was talking of
cheaper bread.

Most curious and significant of all was his atti-
tude toward European politics. He threatened
America with the chaos of Europe if any attempt
was made to nominate a reactionary. And his cata-
loguing of his chamber of horrors was as follows :

"In Russia they have a class government. In
Great Britain they have a laboring man for Premier.
In France, Socialism is in control and it threatens
Germany and Italy."

In 1896 Mr. Bryan would hardly have cited the
leadership of a laboring man as a horrible example.
The fact that Ramsay MacDonald never was a labor-
ing man may be waived.

The young Populist of Nebraska has become a
solid citizen of the conservative State of Florida.
He no longer dreams of Utopia. He is content to
hold fast to Miami.

He is old. He is rich. He is tired.

William Jennings Bryan will lead no more stam-

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pedes. The rover has come to his rest. He worships the lord of things as they are. Mr. Bryan has found that God must love the middle class, because he has been so kind to it.

SHOOTING THE YOUNG IDEA

THE very beginnings I have forgotten. I don't know now whether the alphabet was an adventure and counting up to ten a soul-satisfying achievement. My earliest memory is of something unpleasant. The lessons in penmanship were hateful. We worked in copybooks with maxims as models and these may have been sage and helpful. By now they have passed out of my conscious mind, though that does not necessarily mean they may not have shaped my character. Still, as I examine my character impartially, it seems unlikely.

The thing which sticks is the painful recollection of the conflict between my technique and the method of the school. I wanted to crook my forefinger on the penholder and the teacher insisted that I should guide it with the first two fingers. That dispute must have lasted almost a year and, looking back, it is fair to say that here was time wasted,

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for to-day at the age of thirty-five when I pick up a pen I still employ the forbidden crook of the forefinger. There might have been some nourishment for self-determination in this, but I had no sense of triumph. I conquered only because it was physically impossible for me to write in any other way. The feeling of shame blotted out any possible thrill of victory. When I passed out of that penmanship class, it was with the definite conviction that I was in some way queer and ignoble. Nobody else in the class crooked his forefinger and so it must be evil.

Not until long afterward did I take any pride in the curious mobility of my fingers. I could put my thumb out of joint and also bend it back until it touched my wrist, and there might have been years of elation for me in the possession of these unusual powers. However, I had learned from the writing class that being different only got a person into trouble. By the time I began to admire originality, many years later, approaching age had so stiffened my fingers that I was no longer capable of performing any of the feats.

And there is another respect in which I have been marked by that struggle against the teacher and her orthodoxy. It firmly established in my mind the

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feeling that the physical business of writing was bitter and unpleasant. Circumstance thrust me into the newspaper business and in fifteen years I have ground out several million words, but all of them have been executed in pain and agony. Of course, I learned to use a typewriter in time, but the symbolic repugnance remains, and I doubt if any other laboring man suffers as I do during those moments in which I try to convince myself that further delay is impossible and that the business of setting words down on paper must begin.

Naturally, I do not expect the school system to be revolutionized in order to take care of the child who just has to crook his forefinger on the penholder, but a general indictment can be worked up out of this individual idiosyncrasy. In my day, at any rate, all technique and all method was too inflexible. The average child is an almost nonexistent myth. To be normal one must be peculiar in some way or other. Post-office clerks and newspaper men who run columns and invite contributions would be much happier if the world wrote legibly. But when I was in school legibility was the least of the demands of the teacher. It was not a resting point. We were driven on from there to master

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curlicues and rounded graces which cannot possibly have contributed to the spiritual or material welfare of anyone in the class. Indeed, unless my memory is wholly at fault, not a little of that precious impressionistic youth of us all was wasted in the endeavor to make us develop a slanting hand. There were green trees and blue skies and rippling breezes in those days and there we sat in the classroom trying to make our letters lean over like the tower in Pisa.

I am not a handwriting expert, but show me a page of anybody's script in which the characters cringe in this fashion and I will have no hesitation in saying: "Your chief fault is that you are too docile and abject in the face of authority." Most of us in that class emulated the example of the man who bowed down in the house of Rimmon. As long as the gale of authority blew strong our handwriting bent before it and as soon as admonition died down each *l* and *t* leaped up again.

It may seem captious, but it seems to me that the manner in which grammar was taught to us was almost as ineffective as the system of instilling handwriting, although here the technique was practically reversed. Of course, there were things in between

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grammar and learning to write, but it is the next subject which I remember vividly. I liked grammar because the teacher made a game of it. From the very beginning we had contests and tournaments in which we stood up and parsed each other down. Perhaps I should not complain because this particular class provided me with one of my most treasured memories. When others talk of tennis trophies they have won and golf cups and broad-jump medals, I need not remain altogether silent, for in the annual spring grammar championship held in our school in the year 1897 I was runner-up. The trouble is that, although I remember these sporting events most vividly and the way the competitors went down one by one, there is something I have forgotten. I am not likely to forget how the last two of us parried back and forth until I tripped over a nominative absolute. The thing that worries me is that, as I set this down, I have not the slightest notion of the nature of a nominative absolute or even whether that is the correct phrase for the particular quirk which threw me on that fateful day.

I would gladly trade off all the time I spent on slanting my letters for a better grounding in "shall" and "will." Rules they gave me, but they must

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have been lightly applied, for not one remains. For a protracted period during my maturity I lived in a fool's paradise, saying to myself: "I don't make many mistakes even if I have forgotten the rules. My ear and my eye tell me whether I have chosen the right one." And then one day I induced an expert grammarian to look over several pages of casual copy of mine and he reported back that I was right only 53.639 per cent of the time. This was so near an even break that I realized that practically nothing stood between me and error except the law of averages. Or, to be specific, my education had contributed to me an efficiency of 3.639 per cent over illiteracy.

Not until I had been in school seven years did anything of truly epoch-making importance happen to me. That was the year in which I first ran up against the scientific point of view. The teacher had asked us to submit a report the following day on the weather. What else I said I don't know, but I wrote: "The day was warm." For that I was held up to scorn in full view of the class. Precisely what did warm mean, she wanted to know. I was asked to explain how wide a variation of temperature I included under that head, and it finally dawned on

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me that here was a subject concerning which opinion was a feeble thing in the face of ascertainable fact. I could have consulted a thermometer. This awakening did not rouse me to go into scientific pursuits in later life, but it did leave me not wholly unprepared for that sign which hung on the wall of the city room in later years and which ran: "Accuracy! Accuracy! Accuracy!" To be sure, I found out in time that there were happenings and conditions in life not to be measured by any silver thread, but at least I can remain a little unmoved and impatient at all men who thunder out what they think without peering round corners to look at measuring machines far more credible than any haphazard instinctive feeling.

It was in the same class and from the same teacher that I received the most important single piece of stimulus which came to me out of all school and college. Her name was and is Miss Hotchkiss and she is a Canadian. Probably it went somewhat against the grain for her to teach us American history as it was written in the prescribed textbook. The author I have forgotten, but no patriotic society could possibly have had any objection to the version of events as he set them down. There was nothing

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done by any Britisher which was not identified as rascality and knavery. All Americans concerned, excepting the Judas, Arnold, behaved in a manner which rather diminished the virtues and glories of the folk of whom I had heard in Sunday school.

I cannot say that this excess of zeal sickened me. On the contrary, it fitted in admirably with the notion which prevailed in my mind that all struggles in the world were fights between villains and heroes, the children of darkness and the children of light. There was no hint of anything else until the end of the last class on the final day of the term. But as I was going out Miss Hotchkiss called me over and handed me a small pamphlet and said: "I want you to read this." She gave it to no one else and I don't know why she picked me, as I was a long way from being the prize pupil of the class. When I got home I read the pamphlet and was shocked to find that, although rather apologetic and timid, it endeavored to say some of the things for the English position, in the matter of our revolution, which the history book had left out. The author granted that the war had been a liberalizing influence in the world, but he speculated as to whether the same forces might not have come into the world just as

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surely even if there had been no conflict. He wound up by saying that while Washington was a great man who acted from the noblest motives, several of the heroes, of whom I had read, had become glamorous only through romantic afterglow and were in reality rather small-minded and selfish local politicians.

Now all this would fall under the head of seditious propaganda, according to the most recent textbook investigation in New York City. Nevertheless, after the first shock I realized that something brand-new and enormously valuable had been put into my head. Or, at any rate, I thought it was valuable then and I think that even more strongly today. I am not referring to the fact that here was a new slant on the American Revolution. I mean that for the first time in my life I conceived of any great public question as having two sides. We had the Revolution and the Mexican War and the Civil War in our school, and I can't remember that we ever heard a word of anything except the right side, which was, of course, the American side, or, more specifically, the North American side. What we learned was: "My country always is right." And

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that, from all I read and hear, is still the slogan of the schools.

It seems to me that the expression of dissent, which our school boards call sedition, ought to be fostered rather than whipped out of textbook and teacher. I don't mean that children should be taught that the Revolution, for instance, was wrong or unfortunate. I don't think it was. But it is important that children learn the two-sidedness of history and from that grow to appreciate the double surface of all controversy. By refusing to present all the available evidence we turn out into the world men and women who are certainly going to make rotten jurors and not much better voters. I have been told that if the schools let up for an instant on the steady pump, pump of patriotism, Bolshevism and red rebellion will stalk out of the school doors. That I don't believe. Indeed, I hold just the opposite. For it seems to me that if you train a child to think wholly on one side of any problem there's no telling when he may happen to hop off the particular plane on which you have placed him and become just as bigoted in dissent as he has been taught to be in conformity. To my way of thinking, Charles E. Hughes and Leon Trotsky come pretty

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close to being equally tight-minded. Neither of them seems capable of imagining the existence of any point of view but his own.

Even before we encountered history the teachers had begun to pass out literature to us. All the earliest samples were shed off rather easily, for I remember almost nothing of any prescribed reading before high school. I have, though, a definite memory of what literature seemed to me in the classroom. Literature was prose or verse by somebody who was dead, usually a long time. To the best of my knowledge and belief, no living author was ever mentioned to us. My memory of private and un-compelled reading goes farther back. There were three favorite writers who held my attention at about the same time: G. A. Henty, Horatio Alger, and Walter Scott. I hope that the incidental history which Henty introduced in all his stories is sound because most of what I think I know about world events came from him. Horatio Alger lasted in my affection for almost three years, and then I discovered that the story which he told of Ragged Dick, the newsboy, was almost precisely the same as his tale of Tony, the bootblack. It had been the same story for a long time, but I was slow in catching on

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to this. Henty I gave up simply because there wasn't any more and school put a stop to my interest in Scott. "Ivanhoe" was given to us as something we had to read and then I found that it wasn't fun any more.

Offhand I can name only a few of the school classics. We read "Hamlet" and "Macbeth," and both were spoiled by the interruption of footnotes and the fact that we had to commit lines to memory and write themes on what we thought of the plays. Naturally, we wrote that these were great and masterly works which we had devoured with rapt eagerness. The teacher had already told us the plays were great and we had caution enough to play safe.

Presently Latin came along and then Greek. The current saying was that if you could learn Latin, any other foreign language would be easy. I am not prepared to testify to the truth of this saying, as I never learned any more Latin than was necessary to skim through a college entrance examination, which is not much. Certainly I learned no other foreign tongue. There were three years of French, and all that abides is the opening sentences of the book: "*Ah! un animal. Cet animal est un cheval. Ce cheval est beau.*"

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German was a little easier than French, and I absorbed enough to pass it both as an elementary and advanced subject for college entrance, but the best I can do now is to sing the first verse of "The Lorelei." Or, rather, I know the words. I also passed elementary Greek in the Harvard admission examinations, and that is the greatest mystery of all. It was the most fugitive sort of friendship.

Arithmetic I retain pretty well. I can bank a poker game and keep a pretty accurate score for bridge, and in fact do almost anything which does not involve long division, for which I have rather lost the knack. Algebra is gone. Geometrically speaking, I know that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points and that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle equals the sum of the squares on the other two sides. But both these facts I now accept by faith alone. I can no longer prove them.

Up till now I have been setting this report down with the thought that it fairly well approximates the experiences of the average American in school. With college I must admit that there comes a turn for the worse. I took a good deal less from Harvard than it gives to most, but even the findings of a

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lazy and indifferent student represent the experiences of not a few. Harvard said in effect: "Work if you will," and I made another choice.

However, I would have gained my degree if I had passed just one more course, and the marvel to me is that I got through in so many subjects concerning which my present conscious memory is wholly negligible. For instance, I spent a full year under Kittridge, who lectured on three plays of Shakespeare's, and everything is gone except two digressions. I remember that Professor Kittridge said on one occasion that he believed in personal immortality after death and that once he complained about bad ventilation on ocean steamers. Since then, I understand, the latter matter has been attended to.

In economics I learned that a protective tariff is scientifically unsound, but I can't remember why. Professor Carver used to lecture on various theories of social reform, socialism, communism, and the single tax during the first half year. In the second half he explained why the various panaceas could not work. These later lectures I missed, so I went away with nothing but the most friendly thoughts concerning each and every one of the im-

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practical visionary schemes touched upon in the course.

Likewise, in philosophy there was a charge and a counterattack. Professor Palmer was much concerned with the question of whether human conduct was motivated under a dispensation of free will or whether we all operated under determinism. I missed most of the recoil which came in the second half year and showed how wrong-headed were all the determinists, and so I believe implicitly in fate.

American history I had under Hart, and one of his lectures is still vivid because he got excited about it and acted it out. People used to come from all over the yard to hear Hart talk about John Brown. He told of the execution of Brown after the raid on Harper's Ferry and how they tried to break the old man's nerve by making him wait on the scaffold before they sprang the trap. And at that point Hart would pause for a moment and stand with his head thrown back as John Brown might have stood. And he said that they didn't break the old man's nerve.

But there was another man at Harvard in my time, and he's there now and ever will be, I rather imagine, who did most of all to fire the imagination

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of the youngsters. Hart had just one good performance, but C. T. Copeland played repertoire. He lectured on Dr. Johnson and he taught English composition, and you could go to his room and sit in front of a fire and listen a good deal and talk a little. Copeland has said fifty things that I remember, but, more important than that, I carried away the feel and touch of an enthusiastic personality. He made us know that writing is honorable and alive. Hundreds of men left Copeland and Harvard, eager to sit down and write the great American novel. None of them has done it yet, but some continue to try because they feel, after knowing him, that about the most important thing anybody could do in the world would be to create something fine in words. After fifteen years of newspaper work I still think it would be.

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